The refugees' commercial activities likewise competed with those of local merchants and traders. In certain districts, trade in some goods became controlled by Afghan refugees. Though most refugees were small and middle-sized farmers and smallholders, a sizeable group were artisans and craftsmen. Also, "a large number of Afghan refugees... brought vehicles (trucks, buses, or minibuses) from Afghanistan and are now using them commercially in Pakistan. In September 1982 it was estimated that approx. 2,000 registered AR [Afghan refugee] vehicles were operating, plus an unknown number of unregistered vehicles..." *(Boesen, 1983, p 10)*

RADICAL CHANGE IN LIFE-STYLE

A massive change took place in the Afghans' lives since they sought refuge in Pakistan. Whereas most households were engaged in agriculture in Afghanistan, those able-bodied men of prime working age who had jobs were now mostly unskilled casual labourers, which means low wages and unstable employment. Though women contributed to the household economy by being self employed in their homes in tailoring, sewing, or embroidery, their income was generally extremely low as well.

In their early years in Pakistan, the majority of households had to rely on aid agency relief to supplement their income, but not all were registered for relief distribution. Officially, registration took place on arrival. But members of a household arriving later were not included, nor were any children born after initial registration. A significant number (about 20 per cent) of households were found unregistered for aid, although they lived in official refugee villages. *(Bloxom, 1991, p 4)*

About two-thirds of the men found paid work in Pakistan, a few working for local drug barons. Among the more fortunate were those with farms just across the border in Afghanistan, which they slipped over to tend whenever they could and returned with produce to help feed the family or to sell. In the Pushtun value system, activities connected with agriculture rank considerably higher than crafts and commerce. "Pushtun tribal identity and landholding are closely associated, and to own land, however little, is essential to Pushtun status and self-esteem." *(Boesen, 1983, p 7)*

The refugee settlements were administered by officials of the government's Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR), which is also the major implementing agency for projects funded through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); CAR came to implement 70 per cent of UNHCR-funded programmes for Afghan refugees.

The tents typical of camp life soon gave way to katcha houses, built by the refugees themselves (with bricks of dung, grass and wheat stalks, mud and water). The camps became villages and refugees' houses were often intermingled with or indistinguishable from similar dwellings of the local inhabitants. Each village-camp housed some 10-20,000 inhabitants and was composed of numerous compounds, usually surrounded by a high wall to prevent passers-by looking in. Women and children made up 75-80% of the total refugee population.

AID SCALED DOWN

In the first three to four years of the influx, the Pakistan government provided the refugees with basic needs, though monthly distributions were irregular and mostly deficient. From 1980, United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) launched various large-scale aid programmes, which the government supplemented with a subsistence allowance paid to registered refugee householders. But by the mid-1980s food aid shrunk to provision of wheat, cooking oil and a little fuel – rations that were steadily cut in the early 1990s, by which time many families had become self-sufficient. It was mainly "extreme cases" that still needed aid.

Problems of delivery combined with widespread corruption inside and outside the camps conspired to prevent equality of distribution. Some received full rations, some reduced rations, some no rations at all. Distribution of foodstuffs such

as wheat, milk, sugar and tea, as well as kerosene, from aid agencies was erratic and tightly controlled by Afghan *maliks* (community leaders) and camp officials.

Those entitled to rations, in any case, were only the registered refugees and many were not registered (though some received food and other relief goods provided by NGOs). If they had money, they could bribe their way to registration.

On the whole, the most vulnerable were among the unregistered refugees. They included a high proportion of widowed women, plus the "grass widows" whose husbands were away doing their service with the *mujahidin* in Afghanistan (or away earning money), their children, plus the elderly, the sick and the disabled.

One result of this situation – a huge and widely-spread refugee population, many aid agencies, vast quantities of goods, widespread corruption, difficult and even dangerous transport conditions, plus insufficient knowledge about the neediest refugees – was that refugee settlements in and around the Peshawar area tended to be over-supplied, with no guarantee that supplies reached those most in need, and that those further away tended to be left out.

This had important consequences for all efforts at help-to-self-help – encouraging and assisting the refugees to meet needs in their communities. These self-reliant and fiercely independent people had been denied their usual means of earning their livelihood from the land and most had initially become dependent on hand-outs for their basic needs. In camps that became used to having all their material needs supplied, people were naturally less inclined to make efforts to help themselves; there, the so-called dependency syndrome (aid weariness) set in.

The system was reinforced by the self-interest of Pakistani camp officials and Afghan community leaders. Not only would *maliks* keep a proportion of everyone's ration for themselves as a distribution fee, some would collude with camp officials to over-state numbers of registered refugees entitled to rations. Or bribes were demanded for registration and/or rations. For enterprising people with power, the profit potential was considerable.

Continued fighting in Afghanistan – among the *mujahidin* once their common Soviet enemy had all left by February, 1989 – combined with food shortages at home led to a continued flow of refugees to Pakistan. One year following the Soviet withdrawal, an estimated 80-100,000 per month were arriving.

In April 1992, the regime in Kabul fell and within four months some 1.5 million refugees had returned to Afghanistan. But the violence did not cease: fighting continued between the two main *mujahidin* factions, and was still raging two years later. This caused some of those who had repatriated to return to Pakistan and other, new refugees to follow them – including many from the capital who had worked for Najibullah's fallen Communist regime. These urban refugees went mostly into homes in Peshawar or to camps in and around the city and were widely considered by the "old" refugees, who were solidly anti-Communist, as traitors.

THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN

By 1991, most of the children in the camps were born in Pakistan. Average family size in the camps was 8.5 members, bigger than the average (6.2 members) in Afghanistan. This was due partly to improved living conditions and health services that reduced infant mortality and partly to amalgamation of households. This had developed as a coping strategy, "whereby people affected by human loss regroup into large compound units with more distant relatives, or in exceptional cases with friends, and pool resources." *(Christensen, 1990, p 17)*

Researchers seem agreed that few Afghan (or, for that matter, Pakistani) children are lonely or rejected. A characteristic of Afghan society is its concern and care for children; another is its tradition of taking responsibility for everyone in

the extended family. It can meet most of the material and emotional needs of children. "Socially, people in both countries live in several generations together with strict ranking – the old mother highest in the family and the old father highest in society... The extended family system means that a child who has lost a parent is automatically taken care of by relatives. Sometimes the widow remarries with one of the deceased husband's brothers. Even if both parents are dead, the child is normally taken care of by relatives." *(Ryberg, 1991, p 1)*

"There are no abandoned children among the Afghan refugees", Kerstin Karlén stated in a 1990 evaluation. They are cared for by the extended family and "there is always some family member who takes care of the children if the parents disappear". But this doesn't mean that such children are well-off. Though there is "no doubt about there being many children with one parent or with no parents" cared for by the extended family, they are often "brushed aside from the rest of the family."

One group of children live "under extremely bad conditions" in so-called orphanages run by political parties from which guerrilla soldiers are recruited. The question of how to reach these children and improve their environment "is very very delicate and must be treated with great discretion." If expatriates interfere, "according to the Afghans, the children will be the victims".

She concludes that the only way to improve the situation of Afghan children at risk "is to improve the situation of the whole family". *(Karlén, 1990, pps 10-11)*

There is little community experience or expertise to deal with the psycho-social needs of war-traumatized children, or with disability. "Some of the children traumatized by the war appear to their community as mentally retarded. These children tend to be neglected and under-stimulated, mainly because of ignorance that something can be done with and for them". *(Bartle and Segerström, 1991 (A), p 2)*

Boys who, if they had been living in Afghanistan, would have had farm duties, such as herding, now often found themselves with nothing to do; only some attended school. Girls are expected to help in the home, though they can be seen playing with boys until they reached the age of 8 or 9, when they are segregated (see box, page 14).

OVERALL IMPROVEMENT

Observers of the refugee scene in Pakistan over the past 10-15 years note an overall improvement in children's lives during the 1980s. Writing at the end of the decade, Hanne Christensen notes:

"A special children's universe is now an integral part of camp life, in contrast to the situation in 1982-1983. Crowds of small boys and girls roam joyously around in the open spaces and narrow lanes in between the refugees' houses, adding a lively atmosphere to the somewhat colourless accommodation areas. Smaller groups or individuals play happily with home-made toys of wood and scrap-iron. Minitaure trucks and wheelbarrows are driven up and down the hillsides in the lanes and the compound yards. Dragon kites are flown in the air, butterfly toys are kept on leads by toddlers. Older boys ride donkeys, combining practical errands such as buying food at the camp bazaars with a joy-ride, or they help the bazaar owners with their price calculations. Small children study the mud for *katcha* construction and experiment with it.

"The older girls play mainly with each other or their younger siblings and relatives inside the compound walls, or they are occupied by handicrafts. Boys and girls have pillow fights when an occasion presents itself... In general, they seem to be happy children who enjoy playing together or being creative and useful...

"Boys typically wish to hold clerical positions in banks or local administrative offices in Afghanistan after completion of their education. They believe that such jobs will give them an easy and carefree life with a steady income and guaranteed housing. The traditional occupation of parents in

agriculture is felt to be too remote, and the education they have received in the camp has created different expectations. They would, however, like to have a piece of land and animals to care for in their leisure time, or as a fall-back position, should clerical jobs not be available when they return to Afghanistan.

"Girls mainly wish to stay at home or work in trades inside the compounds. A few would like to work at health centres." *(Christensen, 1990, pps 24-25)*

Literacy rates for individual camps are not available but, according to Christensen, rates for the refugees are 41 per cent for males (but 51 per cent for boys aged 5-11 and 53 per cent for those aged 12-17) and 3 per cent for females (4 per cent for girls aged 5-11 and 1 per cent for ages 12-17). "There is still strong opposition to girls being educated", she notes. *(p 25)*

In theory the *mujahidin* recruit from among able-bodied males of 18 years and over, but in practice younger ones – some as young as 12 – have also been sent to fight the holy war *(jihad)* back home in Afghanistan. Some if not most of them came from children's homes (called orphanages, although not all the boys are without parents), which are run by political parties. The boys receive education, food and housing and their mothers usually get a monthly payment.

RÄDDA BARNEN'S INVOLVEMENT

Rädda Barnen's involvement with Afghan refugees in Pakistan dates from 1983. At UNHCR's request, in September of that year it seconded two social workers, one to the sub-office in Peshawar (North-west Frontier Province) and the other to the sub-office in Quetta (Baluchistan). Thus arose the situation – which continues to this day – of a small NGO (Rädda Barnen) providing financial aid and personnel to a large United Nations body (UNHCR). The rationale behind this for Rädda Barnen was so that it can promote psycho-social work among refugees, including social work benefiting Afghan children, which would not otherwise be provided or given priority by UNHCR; also, to demonstrate to UNHCR the value of such work.

The tasks of the social workers seconded as social service officers (SSOs) to UNHCR were:

- to assess needs in the refugee camps, promote and coordinate social services. (This meant participation on a daily basis in camp affairs);
- to assist implementation of income-generating projects and self-help activities (especially for women);
- to collect information on the refugees' social conditions; and
- to provide guidance and coordination to NGO relief efforts.

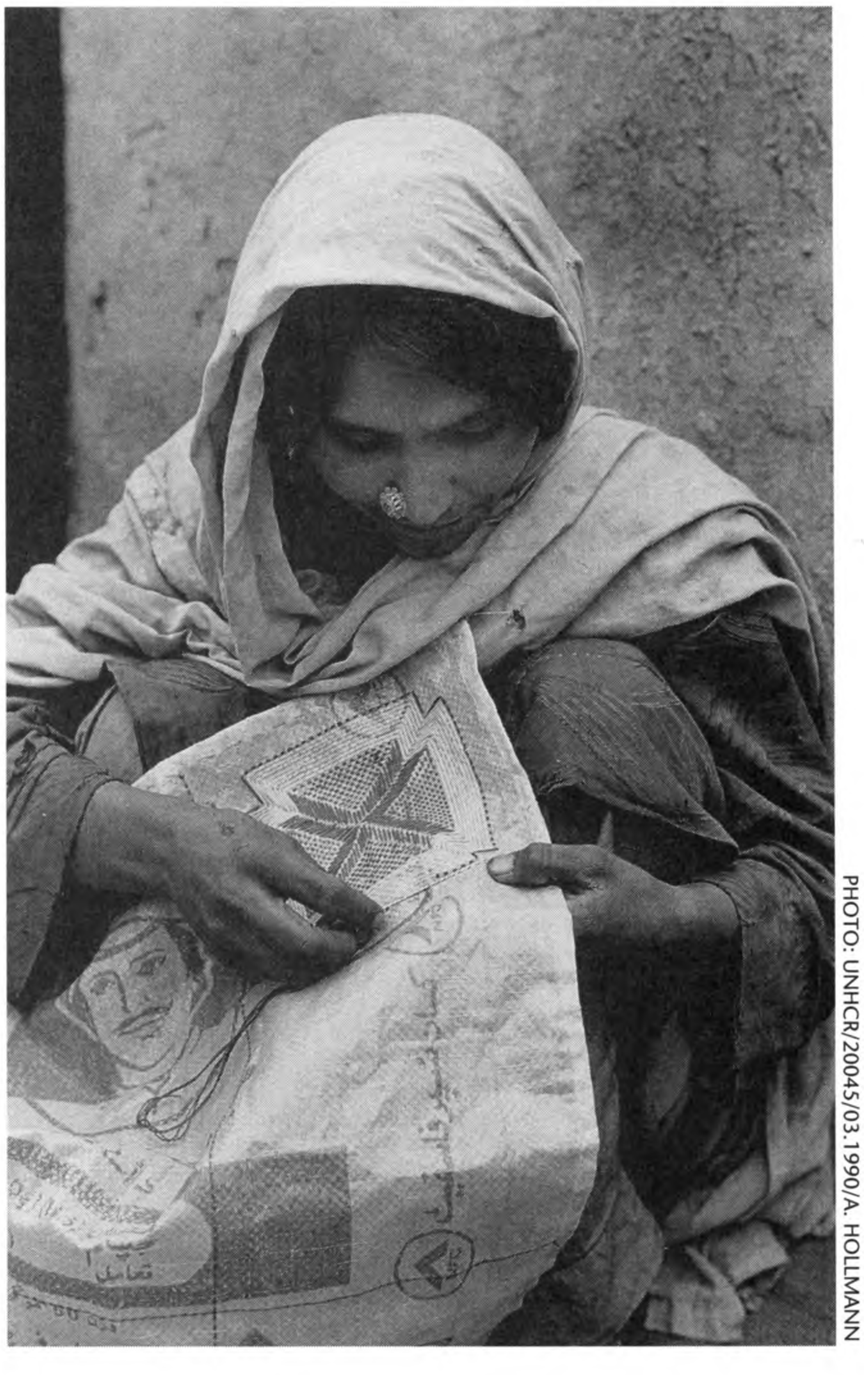


PHOTO: UNHCR/20045/03.1990/A. HOLLMANN

AFGHAN CHILDREN*

Children are one of the major sources of a good and meaningful life. They are considered as carriers of happiness, wealth and security for their parents in their old age. Birth control is seldom practised, except by those educated in the towns.

In Afghan Pushtun non-nomadic society, the birth of a boy used to be celebrated with great festivity, whereas the birth of a girl was often greeted with silence, if not regret... Among the nomads, though, the birth of girls was celebrated... These customs are still in practice in the refugee setting. For the non-nomads, boys and men are perceived as more important human beings. They count for more than girls and women. There is a deep-rooted premise of inequality between the genders built into the social structure.

Children of both sexes grow up in intimate proximity to their mother and other female relatives of the compound. In early childhood, they move freely between the male and female groups in the household. At the age of eight to nine years, segregation of girls from boys is practised. The boys spend most of their time with their fathers and elder brothers, who instruct them in male virtues and tribal laws. Girls begin wearing veils and they are urged to participate in female household chores. Boys begin feeling superior to girls and show this to their sisters by ignoring them.

When girls reach the age of puberty, purdah is enforced and direct contacts are then restricted to the males of a girl's immediate family, i.e. to those whom she cannot marry. When purdah is enforced, it is marked outwardly by her growing hair, which is the sign of an adult woman. The next stage of her life commences at marriage, which often takes place at the age of 14-16 years, when she moves to the status of daughter-in-law. The outward sign is again her hair, which is now parted into many small plaits. The newly married woman serves her in-laws and is ascribed the lowest status of the women in the household. The initial period after marrriage can often be particularly stressful and onerous for the bride. Her mother-in-law has a certain right to demand her service and is often noted as using her to rid herself of unwanted tasks... Usually, she has not met her new family before the marriage and often suffers deep-felt loneliness and longing for her paternal family group. Visits from her biological family are seldom practiced or allowed by her in-laws during the initial period of marital life. She is to stand the problems of the transition alone.



PHOTO: UNHCR/A. HOLLMANN/OCT 1990

* Extract from **The Reconstruction of Afghanistan: A chance for Rural Afghan Women,** by Hanne Christensen, UNRISD, 1990, pps 42-43

Though they retained their links with Rädda Barnen, those seconded were treated and expected to behave like UNHCR staff members. In 1986, after less than three years' experience with this arrangement, the organization was preparing to withdraw its two seconded social workers from Pakistan (on the grounds they were occupied on an ad hoc basis with a host of matters, such as sanitation and hygiene, that could hardly be called social work.) UNHCR persuaded Rädda Barnen to carry on; and did so again on at least one other occasion in later years.

In 1986, the SSO at the sub-office in Peshawar, Kerstin Karlén, and her chief, Barry Rigby, a former social worker, were discussing ways to best help the refugees. Rigby handed her a challenging assignment: "I want you to find out how we can reach the most needy among the refugees."

The secluded compounds and the Afghans' close protection of their womenfolk made it difficult for outsiders to reach the most vulnerable. Clearly, there was a need to identify and locate them – mud walls and *purdah* permitting. A related need was to coordinate the efforts of the myriads of NGO aid agencies – about 150 of them – whose donated supplies, in the face of the widespread corruption all about them, did not always end up with needy refugees. They were often to be seen on sale in the market.

BASED ON SELF-HELP

The plan that developed was concerned primarily with the psycho-social welfare of the refugees rather than their material needs and was based on ideas of self-help and community participation. It envisaged a network of social workers and self-help groups in the camps, with a team of Pakistani government officials to identify needy people – widows, children lacking one or both parents, the elderly, the sick, the disabled – and promote self-help efforts, including income-earning projects.

During the years 1986-87, Kerstin Karlén developed the plan and sought backing within UNHCR and CAR. It was largely thanks to Rigby and the then deputy chief of CAR, Saheed Aktar, in charge of social services and relief, that the plan was put into practice. It had only very lean support from the majority of aid agency personnel, who were either sceptical or hostile.

Originally, the scheme did not include any training body. It centred on CAR creating a unit – a "social welfare cell" – of educated young Pakistanis who were to be known as district coordinators (DCs). Their first task would be to gain the confidence of the refugees, for which they needed to speak their language (which meant that they, like most of the refugees, would be Pushtuns). It was the impossibility of meeting the requirement for Pushtun candidates with "a master's degree in social work and at least five years' working experience" that put the focus on training, and led to Rädda Barnen receiving a project proposal to finance the creation and staffing of a training unit in social work in Peshawar.

Rädda Barnen accepted the proposal but, ironically, rejected the proposer, refusing to extend Kerstin Karlén's contract, or give her a short-term assignment, to help her transform her idea into reality*. (She was not asked to help plan the Training Unit or brief the two social workers hired to set it up.)

What followed was described by one of those involved as "a period of turbulence" in the story of Rädda Barnen operations in Pakistan. For many reasons, discussed in the third chapter, the Training Unit got off to a slow start. It was not until 1990 that the people involved started to feel some pride in it.

Developments in the following years included further training of the district coordinators; training of volunteers among the refugees, of

* Though her close association with the project told against her in 1988, it was counted in her favour two years later when a consultant was sought to evaluate Rädda Barnen's work in Pakistan; she was given the contract.

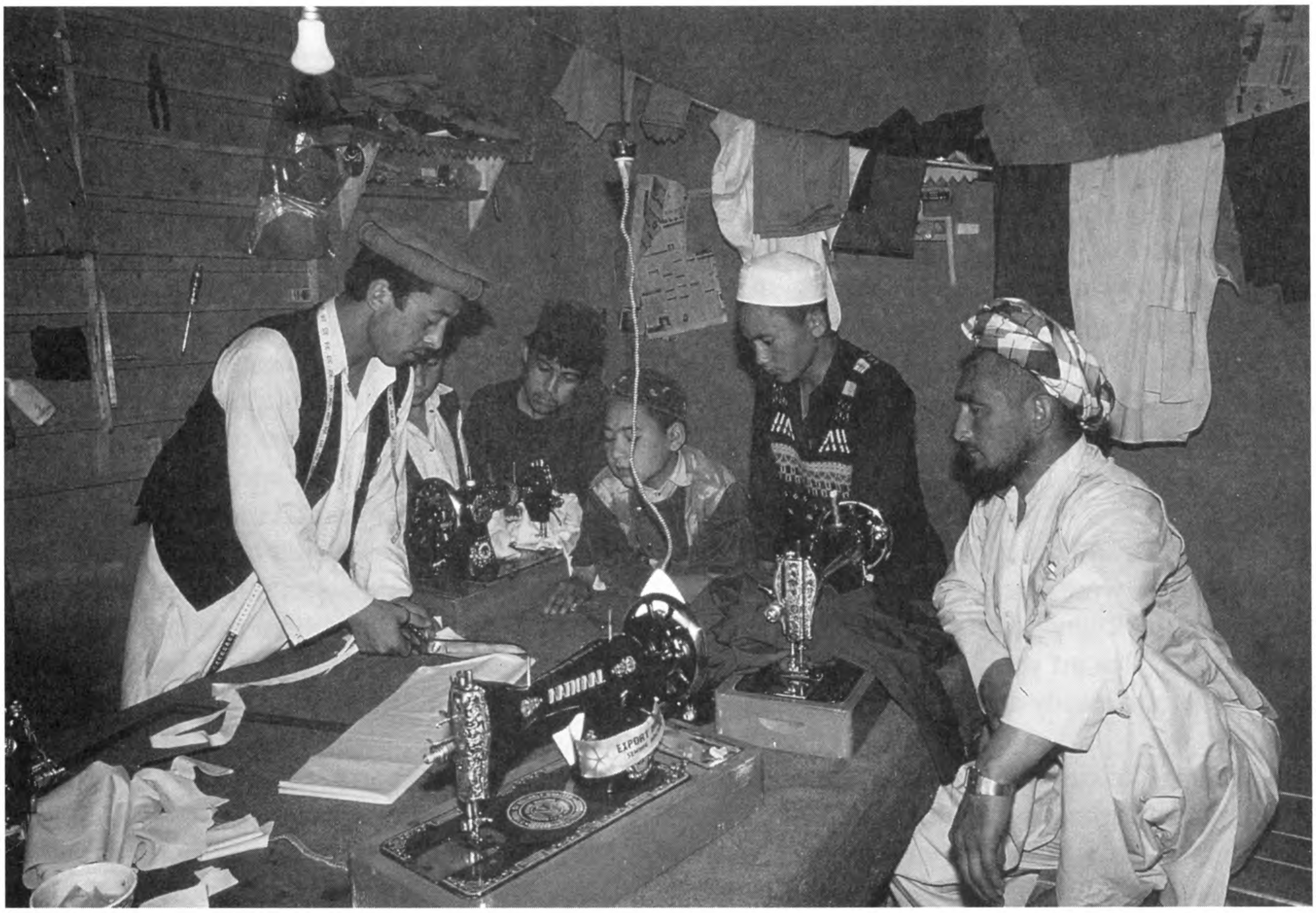


PHOTO: UNHCR/A. HOLLMANN/OCT 1990

UNHCR and NGO staff, and of paid Afghan animators. What began as largely a means of identifying vulnerable refugees, so that aid supplies and services could be targeted to them, developed into a network of social workers promoting and assisting self-help community-based activities in the village-camps.

This operation was jointly created and sustained by a triumvirate of cooperating organizations: the Pakistan government's CAR, the UNHCR sub-office in Peshawar, and Rädda Barnen's Training Unit (RBTU). The key structure in the village camps was the refugees' own social welfare committee, which was in charge of discussing, deciding on and controlling social activities.

Since its creation, the Unit has been strongly influenced by political developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan, especially expected and actual repatriation. The volatile and unpredictable nature of the situation militated against any long-term planning or commitment.

Rädda Barnen's enthusiasm for continuing its secondment of Swedish social workers to UNHCR and its funding of the Training Unit wavered at times. No long-term commitment was ever made; contracts were renewed on a year-to-year basis, even after Rädda Barnen set up a country office in Peshawar in 1991.

In December 1994 Rädda Barnen's Board decided as an aim to close the Training Unit down by the end of 1996 and that, during 1995 and 1996, its main task would be to serve the needs of the Disabled Afghan Project (DAP).

Training

This chapter deals with who trained who, for what purpose and what methods and materials were used.

WHO TO TRAIN

This question had already been decided before the Training Unit started its work. The first trainees were to be the **district coordinators** (DCs), educated Pakistanis who made up the social welfare cell (SWC) of the government's Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) and who were placed in each of the five UNHCR districts where they made their homes.

For their theoretical training, the DCs came at least monthly to the Unit's premises on the outskirts of Peshawar. There, they learnt about interviewing techniques, how to formulate questionnaires and analyse replies to them, group motivation, and writing reports. There were also days devoted to special themes such as child development, children in war, children with disability, and how to start a project.

Classroom lectures, talks, workshops, seminars and discussions at the Unit were complemented by on-the-job training in the camps, which, as it was considered more important, was given more emphasis. The DCs were to obtain information about the refugees and identify vulnerable groups. In addition, they needed a mixture of communication and persuasion skills to convince male camp leaders of the benefits of community development (and that it represented no threat to their authority); also, they had to be able to set up and work with social welfare committees, whose members would receive training in how to run self-help groups and motivate other volunteers.

The DCs were the direct link with the refugees and had the toughest and most challenging job of all the social workers. They were obliged to live in districts where they worked among 100,000 to 300,000 refugees, and to cover large distances over difficult and sometimes dangerous terrain between 10-20 village-camps. The terrain where the refugees settled included mountains, deserts and malarial swamps. They were charged with implementing an unfamiliar, even alien concept (community development) in the face of scepticism and mistrust from their colleagues. Training them to gather information about vulnerable groups was one thing; turning them into motivators rather than authority figures, facilitators of self-help rather than inquisitive outsiders, was a different matter. It required attitudinal changes that could only come about over time.

"There has been a tradition of top-down planning in both Pakistan and Afghanistan", an evaluator explains. "It has been difficult for the CAR/SWC social workers who go into the camps to attempt to set up a bottom-up process while running into top-down authority." The fact that the DCs did not have backgrounds in social work or community development "made them feel insecure and incapable of taking the initiative and making decisions by themselves...". *(Bloxom, 1991, p 25)*

CONFLICTING TASKS

It was a basic problem for the DCs that their first two main tasks conflicted with the third. "While coordination and identification in a community were an 'authority' (top-down) form of decision-making, the promotion of self-reliance on the other hand was a 'persuason' (bottom-up) role. Because of the lack of support and understanding of the appropriate authorities, the promotion of

self-help activities was less likely carried out." *(Bloxom, 1991, p 15)*

Few of the DCs were able to assimilate and apply bottom-up notions of community development. The master trainers concentrated on this minority – those who sought cooperation and support – rather than spreading their time thinly among them all.

Due to a slow start, RBTU trained only 13 district coordinators during 1988 and 23 the following year. Although eight of the original male recruits were still working as DCs two and a half years later, there was quite a high turnover among both male and female district coordinators. At the end of training, each DC received a certificate that recorded how long it had lasted and what it included.

Academic attainment was not the aim of the DCs' training; it was meant to equip them with basic knowledge and practical skills that would be relevant to their work among refugees in the camps. The master trainers argued that, although the Unit's main objective was the training of social workers, training was only a means to an end: the overall aim was to support self-help activities in the camps, the purpose of which – the end results – were improvements in the situation and well-being of women and child refugees.

This line of reasoning led to recruitment and training of Afghan **community volunteers** (CVs) so as to hasten self-help inside the camps. Soon after her arrival to replace Anitha Rönström in July, 1989, Eva Segerström had drawn up a plan to "steer training away from Pakistani DCs towards Afghan CVs". Seven CVs were trained in one camp during the second half of 1989 as a pilot project before the training was extended to other camps.

The training menu for CVs included children in the camps and their needs; preventive health care; identification of the disabled; special needs of traumatized children; the Islami kat Matkar scout movement (referred to later as IK); tailoring for the disabled; and preparing for repatriation to Afghanistan. "Each week-long seminar used to end with the refugees themselves planning some activities", Eva Segerström recalls. "Most were interested in starting groups for children with special needs. Those who wanted to do this came for more training, either at the camp or the Training Unit, to learn more and to get practical advice on how to start a group."

FOCUS ON NEEDS OF CHILDREN

The first batch of newly-trained CVs started self-help child-oriented activities, including a programme for mentally retarded children, plus tailoring training for disabled young men and embroidery for women. And self-help schools were set up that also dealt with the emotional trauma of flight from war and adjustment problems of children in exile.

Among the first volunteers to be trained were members of **social welfare committees** (SWCs) established by district coordinators in collaboration with male leaders in the camps. Their tasks included leadership, coordination of self-help activity groups and liaison with the DCs, to whom they supplied information. Women also later took on this role when female committees were formed.

For the women committee members, training focussed on the needs of children, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI), repatriation, disability and income-generating schemes coordinated by UNHCR. In addition to traditional women's occupations such as needlework, these schemes also included goat farming and poultry raising. (While poultry were traditionally looked after by women, men on Afghan farms cared for larger animals and boys did herding – occupations lost to them in exile. Goats somehow fell on the borderline, and at least in the more remote refugee camps, might be cared for by women.)

The general expansion of Rädda Barnen's Pakistan programme that began in 1990 involved more intensive training and field support. The

training of community volunteers now focused increasingly, though not exclusively, on vulnerable groups and children with special needs. This followed priorities established also by UNHCR. Activities in 1991 included a drug awareness campaign (debates, drama, sports activities); training of mothers in pre-natal and post-natal care; self-help schools for girls (within the women's compound); and such income-generating activities as tailoring, soap-making, embroidery, poultry-raising and handicrafts.

There were a number of other benefits of this mobilization of resources among the refugees: roads, latrines, wells, waiting rooms for women in *purdah* next to basic health units, and several mosques were built, often with voluntary self-help labour, and with NGO assistance coordinated by UNHCR.

The training of Afghans as combined development agents and **animators** that began in 1991 aimed at more intensive work with vulnerable groups in the camps, in preparation for eventual repatriation. The candidates' training, mostly on the job, extended over 12 months; their tasks involved identifying and supporting vulnerable groups and promoting self-help activities, with emphasis on children's rights, in a group of 2-3 camps that made up their area of responsibility.

Though the animators' work closely resembled that of the DCs, it was more intensive; also, unlike the DCs, they were selected from and lived among the refugees They were "useful links between the DCs and the CVs and camp communities. The ground work for the female activities in the southern camps was faciliated by the presence of the Animators". *(Mahlasela et al, 1993, p 53)*

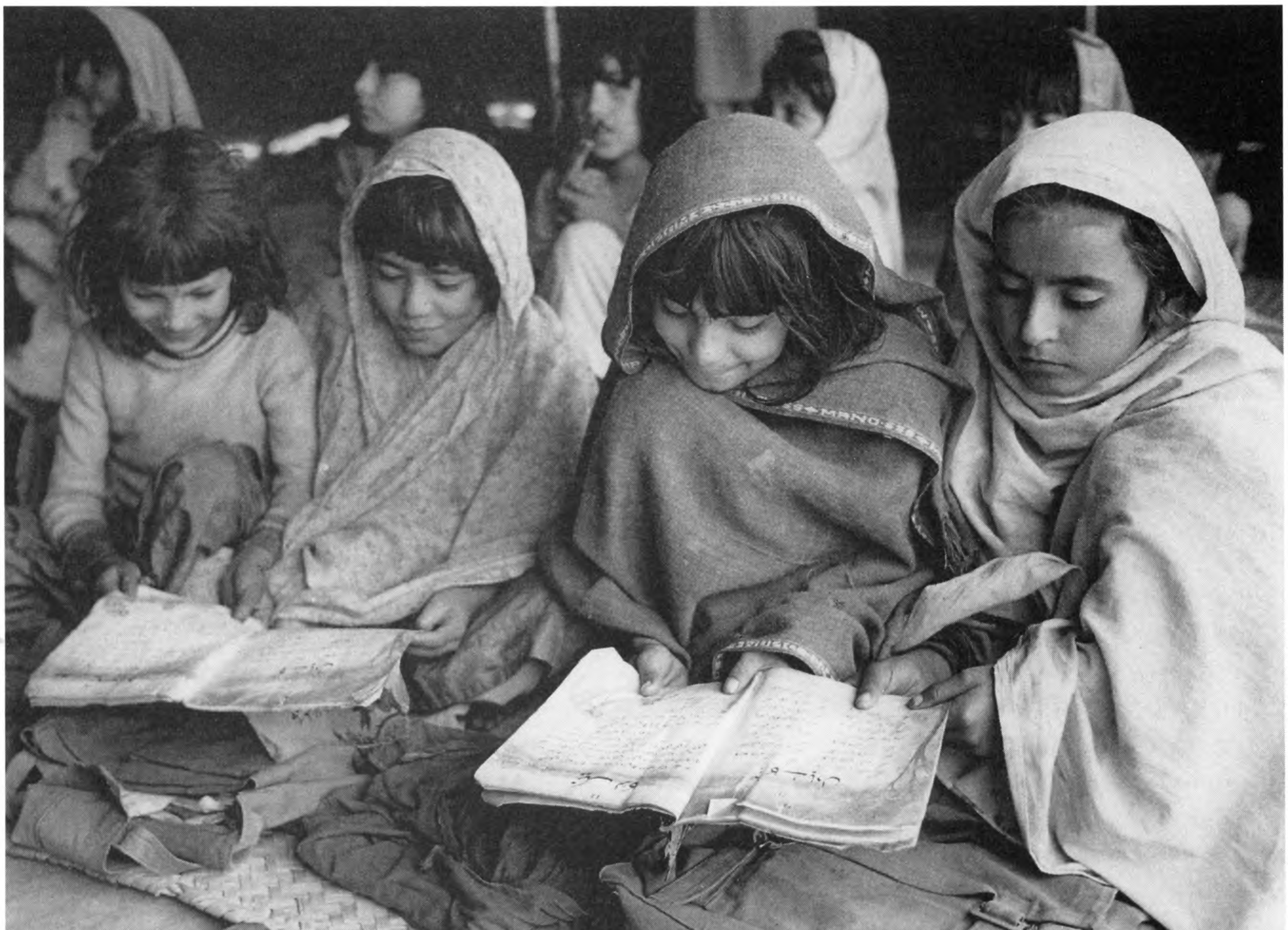


PHOTO: UNHCR/20025/03.1990/A. HOLLMANN

Other publications from Rädda Barnen in English:

No Development without Play, 1990

Steps of Child Developement, 1990

Care and Courage, 1991

The Process of Change, 1991

Ending Physical Punishment of European Children, 1992

Hitting People is Wrong – and Children are People too, 1992

Children's Rights to Develop, 1993

Making Reality of the Rights of the Child, 1993

NGO Work for the Implementation of the Rights of the Child, 1993

From Exposed to Involved, 1994

The Swedish Programme (Annual Report), 1994

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ISCA Annual Report, 1994

Monitoring Mechanisms in Sweden of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1994

The First Anti-Spanking Law in the World, 1994

Working for the Best Interests of the Child, NGO Monitoring Mechanisms in Sweden, 1994

The Unaccompanied Minors of Southern Sudan, 1994

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WHO HAS BEEN TRAINED OVER THE YEARS

- **district coordinators**, *university-educated Pakistanis who to start with knew nothing about community development or help-to-self-help. They were the direct link with the male leaders in the camps who took the decisions affecting their communities. During 1989, 23 DCs (13 males and 10 females) were trained. Their training, which included techniques of gathering and analysing information so as to identify vulnerable groups, was intended to orient them towards a bottom-up approach to promote self-help efforts among the refugees, e.g. show them how to motivate people and encourage them in self-help activities. The DCs were the main focus of the Unit's work in 1988-89; two and a half years later, eight of the men from the original group were among a 20-strong team (11 males and 9 females).*

- *by 1990, the training was centred on* **community volunteers** *among the Afghan refugees whom the DCs helped to identify. Their number grew from 78 in 1989 to 307 in 1990 and included members of social welfare committees trained to organize, run and support special groups (especially child support groups). During this year, the first year of expansion, training was extended also to* **UNHCR and NGO staff:** *20 UNHCR field officers, 10 field assistants of the Norwegian Refugee Council as well as 8 from Save the Children (UK) and 176 medical officers from various other NGOs.*

- *in 1991, training developed and expanded; the emphasis switched from men to* **women volunteers,** *who were trained in 3-8 day seminars, and self-help activities for women and children increased. Also, a new group of trainees – Afghan* **animators,** *charged with initiating, motivating and supporting self-help activities – started a 12-months' training course of instruction, first at the Unit, but mostly on the job in refugee settlements.*

- *in 1992, the work was disrupted by intensive repatriation (May-August), but women's training in particular, at their menfolk's request, continued. In December, 10* **urban animators** *(5 male, 5 female) working in and around Peshawar with new urban refugees, started a 12-months' course of classroom and on-the-job training.*

- *in 1993, new* **animators** *and 8* **female DCs** *were given short-term training and in November, 22 DCs began a six-months' course to develop and improve their skills in promoting self-help activities. Among other groups trained (in community work techniques) were 22 animators from two Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) projects in Afghanistan and a group from a Pakistani NGO, the Bonded Labour Liberation Front. Area coordinators and other social welfare cell staff ran a basic training course for* **new DCs.** *During the year, some 300* **women refugees** *received "basic general awareness training" covering child rights, children's needs, starting self-help activities and techniques of motivating women to undertake them.*

- *in 1994, the Training Unit focused on* **urban animators.** *Some were given further training, and 8 new recruits (4 males, 4 females) began training in April at Nasir Bagh camp. The 22* **DCs** *completed their six-months' course, and training began for, among others, a group of 23 refugees seeking to do voluntary animation work in the camps. Ten* **women teachers** *at camps in and around Peshawar were given instruction in methods and techniques of social animation.*

Sources: Bloxom, 1991; Bartle & Segerström, (B) 1991; Mahlasela et al, 1993; and Lillesaar, 1994.

WHO DID THE TRAINING

As indicated by their title, the **master trainers** were originally intended to hire people locally and train them as trainers. Instead, they did the job themselves, without help in the early years. After all, they were almost the only qualified social workers in sight with knowledge about community development. If DCs showed themselves to be good at communicating with the refugees, encouraging them and teaching them skills of starting up and running groups, they were given training duties: the team of trainers, therefore, was composed of those who showed talent for the task.

The master trainers took most theoretical classes at the Training Unit and accompanied the DCs to the camps, either for on-the-job instruction and guidance in topics already explained theoretically, or to monitor and supervise them. This also gave the Swedish social workers an opportunity to meet and discuss with camp leaders, get to know the conditions and problems at first hand – and escape the paper work and bureaucracy of Peshawar.

As none of the master trainers learnt Pashto, the principle language of the refugees, the presence of at least one of the interpreters (Shereen Nazir or Azatullah Asmut) was essential on these trips. The interpreter/assistants also attended sessions with the DCs at the Training Unit, thus gaining the knowledge and experience that led to them becoming the first locally-hired trainers.

To help with training and bring in outside specialist knowledge, lecturers and instructors were invited to the Unit. Margaret Sinclair, an educator with the UNHCR sub-office in Peshawar promoting income-generating projects, was one of them. Others included a mixed bag of professionals with useful knowledge, e.g. doctors, psychologists, physiotherapists, computer wizards and accountants. In the last two years, area coordinators of CAR's social welfare cell who supervised the DCs have also run training courses.

As they instructed the DCs directly themselves, and used what talent for it they could find among the DCs, the master trainers did not give priority to the training of **trainers**, at least not in the first few years – a key reason being the problems of finding suitable trainees, especially women. Even by February 1991 the RBTU staff (excluding support staff) consisted only of two Swedes and their two interpreter/assistants. At the end of 1992, following the departure of the Swedish master trainers, the Training Unit staff was 12 strong: five women (two Afghans, two Pakistanis and a Swede, the training adviser) and five men (four Afghans and one Pakistani, a non-training manager), a teaching aids assistant and a translator (both male Afghans). By 1994, there was no longer a manager but an administrator, 12 trainers, an accountant, and a training adviser. (RBTU staff mentioned here are listed in Annex I.)

The job description of the trainers reads: "Under the supervision of the RBTU manager, assist in training activities to promote the process of community based social work, community development, social animation and intervention with community groups, with a focus on distressed Afghan children." *(Mahlasela et al, 1993, p 13)*

MORE THAN MERELY TRAINING

The term "training" implies a somewhat rigorous education/instruction according to a definite sylllabus and methodology; in that sense, it is not really appropriate to describe what the Training Unit did, for two reasons. The first is that there was no intention that the district coordinators should be so academically well-trained that they could obtain diplomas or degrees in social work; what they received was not formal training but rather instruction on meeting changing needs for social work in the camps.

The second reason was that although the Training Unit provided instruction on a number of subjects, it also did things other than training – that is, in addition to lectures and seminars on information-gathering techniques and community development, demonstration of communica-

tion techniques and the use of computers, and so on. It went further to stimulate, facilitate and assist the self-help activities that training had made possible.

So, for example, there were many visits to camps near and far, to monitor, supervise and encourage the work of DCs and CVs, also to negotiate with camp leadership, advise on starting up self-help groups, help parents to understand their disabled children's need for stimulation, lead seminars on planning, supervision and how to handle stress – all these activities, and more, were included under "training".

There was nothing in the job description of the master trainers that spoke of following up the training; like so much of what they did, it depended on their own choices and decisions. Despite the rigidity of working, at first, within the UN system – making reports (one type for UNHCR, another for Rädda Barnen), filling out forms, producing receipts, obtaining permits to visit refugee camps, and so on – they were in day-to-day control of the Training Unit. And they gave themselves a good deal of freedom to decide how to organize and perform their work.

While in Peshawar they may have felt weighed down with bureaucratic demands and office work, once the master trainers, with their interpreter/assistants, piled into their Toyota Landcruiser and headed out towards mountains or desert, they were on their own, unhindered, and in control. The journeys may have been uncomfortable and the assignments challenging, but once they reached the village-camps, they felt they were getting to grips with the problem.

Observers of the results of their hands-on approach, including evaluators, have been generally critical of what went on at the Training Unit in Peshawar (poor office management, staff discipline, control of expenditure, maintenance of records, and so on) but often positive about what trainers, DCs, animators and community volunteers managed to achieve against formidable odds.

FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS

A work plan drawn up in May 1990 for the last four months of the year focusing on community volunteers allows for master trainers and field assistants to design a course of four seminars; for methodology to consist of lectures and presentations, small group work, plenary discussion, theoretical studies and planning of activities; and for the actual instruction to be carried out in the local language by the field assistants. The four main subject headings are:

(i) **children in camps and their needs;** child activities; education and community involvement. (What children learn in camps; what children did before the flight; how the difference affects the children; the most important needs of children; how realistic is the child's view of Afghanistan?; why some children drop out of school; how to enhance children as future resources for Afghanistan.)

(ii) **health and community involvement;** refugees in camps – a resource? (Includes a lecture by a doctor, discussion of the most common diseases for women and children; disease prevention via knowledge (information and motivation); and "where there is no doctor".)

(iii) **income and education for women:** Is it possible? How? Specifically how for females and children? (Includes income generation, education and training; strengths and weaknesses of different types of projects; and meeting the needs of women and the community.)

(iv) **preparation for repatriation** back to Afghanistan. (Fears and desires about going back; physical, mental and emotional preparation for the return; special preparations needed for children and for women, especially mothers; and a comparison with the flight to Pakistan.)

The plan called for training of male volunteers in Peshawar at the Training Unit, that for women at home in the refugee villages – 20 trained in

each of the four topics (two trainees per district, both members of the same village social welfare committee).

A similar series of seminars, to be held in English, was planned simultaneously by the Training Unit for CAR, UNHCR and NGO officials. The instruction would include inputs by the Rädda Barnen team leader and UNHCR's social services officer.

That the quality of the training declined following the abolition of the twin posts of master trainer in the middle of1991 is confirmed by several sources. The evaluation by Mahlasela et al, for example, found in 1993 that "there is no documented or formalised curriculum for the training of trainers. This training has been haphazard and has mainly relied on learning through copying what the master trainers have been doing." *(p 2)* All the trainers interviewed felt that "the goals and objectives of the programme are either unknown to them or are unclear" and a number stated that "during induction for the job, goals and objectives were never explained to them". *(p ll)*

Although "quality of the Basic Training delivered by the unit is very good for the purposes of fostering participation in Social Welfare Committees, reaching women behind *purdah*, enhancing intertribal action, increasing respect for the disabled and raising awareness on the rights of the child" *(p 3)*, it deteriorated after 1991. "CVs trained in the first batch (1989) have received extensive training in the classroom and in the field. They are equipped to link up with the refugees and generate interest in camp activities". But after1991, "training at RBTU has been of shorter duration, of an inferior quality and inadequate to meet the needs in the camps... The present training... lacks professional competence to meet CAR/SWC's needs... Some of the trainers do not have the competence to act as discussion partners to the DCs...

"Since 1992, the CV training at RBTU has been of 1-5 days duration and limited in scope, being focused on the rights of the child and vulnerable groups exclusively. The training lacks innovation and stimulation to sustain activities started by the various CVs in the field. To cirumvent this problem, RBTU trainers have started initiating their own programmes in the field i.e. doing the work of the CVs e.g. women's activities, child groups, motivation training, needs assessment of vulnerable groups etc. Today RBTU training at camp level is often initiated by the trainers themselves, with no clear goals or objectives." *(Mahlasela et al, 1993, p 57)*

METHODS AND MATERIALS*

Methods and techniques of theoretical instruction differed according to the preferences of Training Unit staff and what they considered appropriate for different groups of trainees at a certain time. Instruction ranged from lectures, seminars and workshops to role play and, in particular, learning-by-doing. The Afghan volunteers tended to enjoy role play more than any other type of learning. The Pakistani DCs, on the other hand, expected and received a more academic type of training, with more theoretical instruction.

Teaching materials were put together by master trainers, who took passages from various books and adapted them. They also used a variety of teaching aids: photos, drawings, short stories, flip charts, overhead projection, posters, audio tapes and films. With emphasis since 1988 increasingly on Rädda Barnen as a child rights organization, it was natural that overseas staff should be directed to stress advocacy for these rights and education about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. That the focus of all programmes should be children at risk (with refugee children prominent within that group) had not changed. But specific mention of the Convention in a fundamentalist Muslim society

* Materials used in the training are listed in Annex II. A more detailed description of methods and materials used with refugees in Pakistan and elsewhere for training in community development will be found in **Focus on Children in Refugee Camps**, a forthcoming Rädda Barnen publication by Eva Segerström.



PHOTO: UNHCR/A. HOLLMANN/OCT 1990

caused some problems at first until RBTU staff came to accept that most of the Convention's Articles could be related to specific passages in the Koran – which rendered them acceptable. Other Articles, for example those that seemed to the Afghans to extol child rights at the expense of parental authority, could simply be ignored.

District coordinators in the Peshawar area are reported as saying they did not feel the Convention to be a necessary or culturally-acceptable tool to increase awareness of child rights. They saw it as originating in the "superior" West to superimpose its views of children's upbringing on the "inferior" developing world. As long as the Koran and *mullahs* and *maliks* agree that children have rights and parents responsibilities, they believed that "everyone will perform their duties and obligations". *(Mahlasela et al, 1993, p 33)*

The conclusion of this evaluation is that "all clauses infringing on cultural norms and traditions and not accepted by the *mullah*, the *malik* and the elders of the camp have to be excluded. Child rights are accepted by the parents only if they do not infringe on obedience to parents and elders. Further, child rights have to be balanced with social obligations towards the family, e.g. children could go to school only if they can work in the afternoon and evenings to support the family". *(Mahlasela et al, 1993, p 59)*

The Training Unit

This chapter deals with the origins, organization, financing and running of the Training Unit, different phases and problems in its existence, and changing staff and strategies that affected the work and its results.

The origin of the Unit goes back to 1985-86, to Kerstin Karlén's idea to develop a network of social workers to work in the refugee camps and serve as the main link with the refugees. Although civil servants employed by the Pakistan government's Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR), they would be selected and guided in their work by the seconded social services officer at UNHCR. "The objective was to come closer to the refugees, to get more knowledge about the conditions..." *(Karlén, 1990, p 3)* This was essential to enable UNHCR to target its aid, to direct goods and services where they were most needed, as well as to encourage and support self-help activities.

In the summer and fall of 1987, the project got under way with the hiring of 13 English-speaking Pakistani university graduates, 11 males and two females, who formed the nucleus of a new social welfare cell inside CAR, financed by UNHCR. One had a degree in international relations, another in chemistry, another in sociology, but only three had any experience of social work.

The fact that candidates with "a master's degree in social work and at least five years' working experience" were simply not to be had was due at least partly to a conception of social work in Pakistan geared to middle-class do-gooders raising money to implement paternalistic welfare projects for the poor. Among nearly 200 potential candidates for the new jobs from the Social Studies Institute in Peshawar, not one was selected. (The successful candidates were respondents to newspaper advertisements.)

The final selection criteria for CAR's district coordinators (DCs) demanded Muslim university graduates, Pushtuns like the majority of the Afghans, English speaking, preferably with experience of social work and in any case with interest in the refugees. The demand for a master's degree and five years' experience was replaced by Kerstin Karlén's subjective judgement of personality.

On the plus side, these fledgling social workers "had quite varied skills and potentials". *(Karlén, 1990, p 3)* On the negative side, they were of a higher social class than nearly all the refugees, tended to feel superior to the Afghans, and knew little or nothing about the concept, ideology and methods of community-based social work. The two women recruits were to look after the interests of women refugees at the Peshawar office. The DCs' task included:

- gathering information about the refugees, including the children; and, in particular:
- identifying vulnerable groups (which included the disabled; families depending on casual earnings of one unskilled man; female-headed households; and children who lacked schooling or were subjected to passive rote learning in local schools);
- linking vulnerable groups with NGOs coordinated by UNHCR that offered material aid and services, including income-generating projects;
- helping unregistered refugees to become registered (which allowed them to qualify for rations); and
- initiating, promoting and assisting self-help activities among the refugees.

TRAINING PROPOSAL

If the DCs were to succeed, they had to overcome objections from conservative and suspicious Afghans, as well as scepticism and envy from colleagues and others, especially those who worked in the same areas. To allow them to do their job, the DCs each had an official car with a driver – an important status symbol. So long as they lacked education in community development, however, it was unrealistic to expect them to do much promotion of self-help, which requires a bottom-up approach, whereas the other tasks can be performed in an authoritative, top-down way. It quickly became obvious that the training the district coordinators received would have to go further than methods and techniques of interviewing and information-gathering (how to formulate questionnaires and analyse replies to them, for example). They needed instruction in the theory and practice of community development.

But where were they to get it? There were no facilities for providing this kind of instruction and training in Pakistan. For this reason, Kerstin Karlén made a new proposal to finance creation of a training unit and cover staffing and operational costs for two years. Rädda Barnen accepted the proposal and started recruiting two Swedish social workers to set up and run the unit, whose output was to serve the needs of UNHCR and CAR.

Meanwhile, she started herself to train the fledgling DCs with an assistant, Nasreen Khattack, a Pakistani woman with a master's degree in social work. Their instruction was largely in the nature of on-the-job training; the DCs had already started working in pairs in five NWFP districts.

Kerstin Karlén expected to help the two Swedes, both designated master trainers, to set up the Unit, but had to leave when her contract expired in March 1988, one month before they arrived. Rädda Barnen personnel policy was to restrict such contracts as hers to two years. Also, some colleagues at headquarters felt her personal involvement with her proposal was too strong. Instead, she had several months' overlap with her successor (Erica Lundström), who arrived in Peshawar in January, 1988, and who also tried her hand at DC training.

The two original master trainers (Anitha Rönström and Håkan Törngård) arrived in Peshawar in April 1988. For various reasons, things got off to a slow start; the Unit didn't really begin to function until one year later and even then continued to be plagued with a host of problems – some of which were left unresolved.

To start with, the newcomers were inadequately prepared for the realities of working in Peshawar. Though UNHCR and CAR were essential partners in the operation, they were not briefed on how these organizations worked and their job descriptions did not call for managerial and administrative skills. Secondly, conflict between master trainers and seconded staff at the UNHCR sub-office was virtually inevitable, given that their duties, responsibilities and interests overlapped.

The costs of setting up and running the Training Unit were to be met by a trust fund that already existed to meet the costs of the Swedes seconded to UNHCR: Rädda Barnen's money transferred via UNHCR headquarters in Geneva to its sub-office in Peshawar and administered by a seconded social services officer. This was considered the best way – almost the only available mechanism then – of channelling money from Stockholm.

Technically, the Unit would belong to UNHCR and those who ran it would be considered seconded to the Peshawar sub-office, although they would be operating from a separate building. This not only reflected the intention that the Unit be closely tied to UNHCR; it also allowed the host country's requirements to be met. For Rädda Barnen had no official status in Pakistan and therefore could not itself implement projects. It also couldn't hire people, so an arrangement was made with Save the Children (US), an accredited NGO and a partner of Rädda Barnen in the International Save the Children Alliance (ISCA), for it to nominally employ those to be hired locally.

RB is not accredited?

BUREAUCRATIC HOLD-UP

But the money didn't arrive: when the master trainers arrived in Peshawar, they learnt to their dismay that "it hadn't come through". It had "got stuck" somewhere in the bureaucratic pipeline. Without the magic piece of paper known as a Letter of Instruction with administrative directions from UNHCR headquarters in Geneva, the Peshawar sub-office could not approve any expenditure. Complaints from the two new Rädda Barnen master trainers ("It's our money after all!") were to no avail. It was their first, bitter experience of the UN system, of which they knew nothing.

The hold-up was not a matter of hours, or days, or even weeks. It took five months before the Letter of Instruction had been received and digested and procedures established that enabled money to be drawn from the Rädda Barnen trust fund. At last the exasperated master trainers were finally authorized to hire premises, staff and equipment, and start training. Until then, Håkan Törngård recalls, "our salaries were wasted". (He adds that if he had known what he knows now about the working of United Nations bodies, he would have been able to find a way through the bureaucracy and cut short the delay.) His colleague, Anitha Rönström, recalls that they had to wait even longer, that they "did not have access to money, staff or cars until 8 months after the project started". *(Rönström, 1994, p 17)*

Premises for the Training Unit were found on the outskirts of Peshawar and the master trainers moved in. They had already discovered that they could not expect an enthusiastic welcome from UNHCR, CAR or local NGOs. "UNHCR understanding and support has been mixed. While encouragement and support came from TSS [Technical Support Services] in Geneva and the Chief of Mission in Islamabad, local UNHCR/SOP [sub-office Peshawar] administrators were sceptical... and not supportive during the formative implementing stages... Other officials, including SOP Territorial staff, GOP [Government of Pakistan] officials (District Administrators and other departments of CAR) were also sceptical, and appeared to be threatened by a process that involved target group (refugee) pariticipation in their own development." *(Bartle & Segerstöm, 1991 (A), pps 3/4)*

Though it was not intended that the expatriates would do the actual training (for one thing, they didn't speak Pashto, the main language of both DCs and refugees); in fact they trained both the DCs and those they hired who would later become trainers. Initial delays had made them anxious to get on with the job, not hold things up until suitable local people could be found and trained. Also, naturally enough, they wanted to implement their own ideas about training and social work.

The first two key local appointments were interpreter/assistants: Shereen Nazir, a Pakistani woman teacher, and Azatullah Asmat, a male Afghan architectural student. They were trained along with the first batch of DCs, later went to Sweden for special courses and eventually, in 1990, became deputy master trainers. They were the senior trainers by 1992 and were still on the staff at the end of 1994.

PROS AND CONS OF "DOUBLE OWNERSHIP"

Slowly, UNHCR (through its social services unit), CAR (through its social welfare cell) and Rädda Barnen (through its Training Unit) struggled to establish their joint venture, though some of the problems and tensions between and within the triumvirate persisted, even surviving staff changes and replacements.

One fundamental reason was that the Swedes had two masters, UNHCR and Rädda Barnen; as a result, their loyalties were sometimes in conflict. Did they first and foremost belong to UNHCR or to Rädda Barnen? It was not always obvious how they would see themselves, or be seen. Those at UNHCR's Peshawar sub-office were inclined to feel this conflict more keenly than the master trainers, who in the early years were also (if only technically) seconded to UNHCR; in their minds, they worked for Rädda Barnen.

There were advantages to this "double ownership", however. For a relatively small input in money and personnel, Rädda Barnen could gain a wealth of experience in working with refugees in partnership with government and UN bodies. The name of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees conferred a status and recognition on the Rädda Barnen programme in Pakistan and secured it entry to the refugee camps. Also, through its training of Pakistani government staff – and, later, UNHCR and NGO personnel – Rädda Barnen was able to increase awareness of the psycho-social problems faced by child refugees and other vulnerable groups, and the advantages of a bottom-up community-based approach.

Among the benefits of the arrangement for UNHCR were, first, that the trained district coordinators would supply information about vulnerable groups to help target material supplies and services to the refugees. On a different level, it would also gain experience from being involved in an innovative approach and methods of promoting self-help and bottom-up development that it could never gain alone.

But everyday here-and-now reality was fraught with inter-organizational and inter-personal problems. Overlapping roles and responsibilities fueled rivalries and disputes, bureaucratic red tape was resented, and at times tempers were kept only barely in check. Who-does-what, who-reports-to-whom arguments, jurisdictional disputes over such things as the use of vehicles, followed by decisions that were never implemented, further fouled the atmosphere. In contrast to the democratic and participatory nature and goals of the training project was the strict top-down hierarchy of UNHCR. It was not surprising, in the words of one of the Swedes, that "everyone was confused by his or her role".

Cooperation was difficult in this situation. Anitha Rönström recalls how the seconded UNHCR social service officers and the master trainers were supposed to "plan, organize and implement the supervision" of the DCs' field work. But "the working model was extremely confusing for everyone involved and had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the training". *(Rönström, 1994, p 17)*

Nevertheless, friendships and alliances were formed and cooperation was sometimes more evident than conflict. Those concerned with questions of disability in the UNHCR sub-office and the Training Unit got on well together while others overcame conflicting organizational rivalry and overlapping duties. For instance, Cecilia Ryberg in UNHCR and Eva Segerström in the Training Unit discussed common problems and took the initiative in working out an informal understanding of which-area-is-yours-and-which-is-mine. Concretely, this allowed the master trainers control of all training and field-oriented activities, while leaving UNHCR's social services unit to look after programming, budgeting, salaries and personnel.

Another positive result of collaboration between these two was a number of meetings in Peshawar to which DCs and UNHCR field officers, who had often been in conflict, were invited. These get-togethers succeeded in defusing their mutual antagonism and kindling cooperation between them. This resulted, among other things, in faster and more efficient identification of vulnerable households among newly-arrived groups of refugees.

MONITORING AND SUPERVISION

When DCs accompanied master trainers and their assistants to the camps, the Swedes were naturally considered the senior members of the group. Yet on occasions UNHCR cracked the whip and asserted itself. When 40,000 quilts were to be delivered to the camps, or relief supplies distributed after a flood, UNHCR asked RBTU to "mobilize" the DCs – an unwelcome reminder to Training Unit staff that emergency relief took precedence over supposedly less urgent development-oriented social work.

Such incidents gave point to debates about whether the Training Unit should confine itself strictly to training. How about essential follow-up

work with the refugees? Did it make sense for this to be the exclusive province of UNHCR, when inevitably the master trainers monitored and supervised the DCs while training them?

For the master trainers it was clear they should follow up training of the DCs by monitoring and supervising their work (tasks that UNHCR's social services unit had been doing before the Training Unit existed and which on paper it continued to perform). Actual training could not easily be separated from social work that was meant to result from it: where did one end and the other begin? There was no convenient dividing line where the master trainers could step back and allow their fellow social workers from UNHCR to take over. The confusion also sometimes caused problems for the district coordinators: To whom were they to consider themselves responsible? Whose instructions had priority?

In any case, what exactly did "monitoring" and "supervision" mean? At least part of the confusion lay in different understandings of these and other terms. To some staff, monitoring was what you did with the Swedish master trainers when you all climbed into a four-wheel-drive vehicle and took off on the dirt roads – there were no metalled roads in NWFP – to visit the camps and talk with the people there. To some, monitoring meant comparing data from today with that for last year, while others took it to be synonymous with supervision – seeing that people did their job properly.

Håkan Törngård, who has 20 years' experience of social work, including five years in Pakistan, has often come up against problems caused by different understanding of the same terms and considers that "we have to be very careful to spell out exactly what we mean". *(Törngård, 1991, p 8)*

Jörgen Persson, who took over as Rädda Barnen Representative in Pakistan in 1993, considers that some directives from headquarters "created confusion". Stockholm "wanted to create a child rights programme out of a community-based programme". Also, "repeated shifts of staff at the Pakistan desk in Stockholm and a non-Swedish-speaking Representative contributed to lack of continuity and smooth working". He is critical, too, of those on the spot in Peshawar, pointing to "an exaggerated tolerance for all kinds of behaviour" at the Training Unit, born of "the viewpoint of solidarity organizations that all Afghans are infallible heroes... The expression 'It's not in our culture' was given veto rights at decision time".

Jörgen Persson also points to the permanently temporary mandate of the Training Unit as it limped from one stay of execution to another. ("Time and again the question arose: 'Shouldn't we close up shop?'") This perspective, he maintains, made it easier for those responsible in the field to defer complex or sensitive problems rather than tackle them. "If we're only going to continue for another year" became the rationale for retaining the status quo.

At the same time, he recognizes the difficult working conditions in Pakistan and says (referring to the Mahlasela report's "snapshot" view of the situation in August/September 1993): "I'm sure other, similar evaluations of other aid efforts would be just as critical".

A number of those interviewed for this report pointed out that employment of Pakistanis and Afghans together (such as at the Training Unit, the UNHCR sub-office and offices of many NGOs in Peshawar) usually caused trouble. Problems arose partly from class (and hence social and economic) differences and partly from the difficulties for both guests and hosts of the long-term refugee presence. At times the Afghans and Pakistanis at UNHCR and the Training Unit didn't speak to one another, let alone collaborate.

CAN VOLUNTEERS BE PAID?

A highly sensitive and persistent issue among the social workers was remuneration for voluntary work. Rädda Barnen documents provide contradictory information, which interviews failed to clarify. For example, the Year End Report for 1990 to Rädda Barnen headquarters states flatly that community volunteers "are unpaid".

The Rädda Barnen Training Unit

Community-based social work with Afghan refugees in Pakistan

By David Millwood

Rädda Barnen
SWEDISH SAVE THE CHILDREN



PHOTO: UNHCR/19156/09.1989/H.J DAVIES

This seems to be confirmed by Lonela Bloxom's statement *(Bloxom, 1991, p 26)*: "Contrary to previous experience, Afghan refugees recruited as community volunteers can be motivated to work without a monetary incentive". However, a report at the beginning of 1991 by one of the master trainers states that those volunteers who lead children's groups "are paid a remuneration... given to them in the presence of other committee members". *(Second Newsletter from Pakistan to Rädda Barnen local branches.)*

Cecilia Ryberg recalls that CVs were not paid anything at first, only after they had been running self-help groups for about six months and then "it was agreed to give them something". But the payment was made to the social welfare committee, who decided "if it should be kept for the community or given to the CVs".

The 1993 evaluation states (on p. 36, referring to Chakdara camp): "An incentive of Rs 300 per month, after the training, was paid by the RBTU for the first 6 months to each female CV. The child groups functioned for 8 months and the CVs lost interest when the payment was withdrawn". *(Mahlasela et al, 1993)* Why it was withdrawn – or why given in the first place – is not explained.

According to one source, refugees who initiated activities and were rewarded with an invitation to continue training "were paid a small stipend" while another states that some volunteers devoted so much time to unpaid social work that they hadn't enough time to earn money to support their families. One interviewee recalls that the Rädda Barnen Country Representative (the former team leader) refused to honour commitments made by Unit trainers to pay volunteers, and that this caused "a big fight".

The issue was never settled. The absence of any Rädda Barnen policy or rules on the question contributed to problems and misunderstandings – and to dissatisfaction among Afghan promoters of self-help schemes when promised payment failed to materialise, or payment was made in one camp but not in another.

The problem centred on the still unanswered question: Is it *ever* appropriate to pay volunteers and, if so, under what circumstances?

GROWTH AND EXPERIMENTATION

Papers covering the initial period of turbulence give what at first seems to be a contradictory picture. However, closer reading, combined with questioning of those involved with the Training Unit in 1989, 1990 and 1991, suggests that progress and good results were achieved in those years despite organizational chaos. The image of a messy, disorganized kitchen of disputatious cooks who nonetheless produce original and satisfying food seems to fit. It is not one that the master trainers during that period take issue with.

The turbulence included staff changes. One of the two original master trainers, Anitha Rönström, quit precipitately early in 1989 and was replaced by Eva Segerström, and a team leader was appointed. This new position was filled by Phil Bartle, a Canadian, in May, 1989. Though it was hoped he would help to sort out some of the troubles among the triumvirate in Peshawar, his main task was to obtain accreditation from the Pakistani government – technically, a "No Objection Certificate" – and set up an independent Rädda Barnen office, which would then absorb the Training Unit and become operational. (The Rädda Barnen Board had already designated Pakistan a Programme Country at the end of 1989.) There were plans for a Rädda Barnen programme that would include projects for Pakistan children and cross-border operations on behalf of the Afghans.

When the No-Objection Certificate was finally approved in 1990 and a Rädda Barnen field office opened in Peshawar the following year, funding for the Training Unit was arranged direct from head quarters, bypassing UNHCR. Phil Bartle was appointed Country Representative and was eventually succeeded in January 1993 by a Swede, Jörgen Persson.

A paper written some four months after Phil Bartle's arrival says the Training Unit "needs more structure, improvements in its syllabus and curriculum development of its workplan and clarification of its objectives and strategies to achieve those objectives." *(Rädda Barnen Pakistan Briefing Notes, 1989, p 5)* Internal RBTU administration seems to have been neglected – there was no provision for it in the early budgets and little attention was paid to keeping records and writing reports. Bartle himself today rates the Unit's performance in accounting, accountability, reporting and documentation as "poor" .

The master trainers, though in de facto control of the Unit, were sometimes unsure about what they could do "without first asking for UNHCR permission". Their inclination was to act first and ask questions afterwards. One of their early initiatives, in 1989, addressed the conflict between the various tasks of the district coordinators.

The DCs' three main tasks "were Coordination [of NGO aid], Identification [of vulnerable groups] and Community Development. The two tasks, identifying the most needy in a community (an authority/decision-making role) and promotion of self-reliance through organizing self-help projects (an education/persuasion role) were in conflict. Having multiple job tasks allows for flexibility in the wide range of conditions between districts, but where support and understanding were lacking from the authorities, the self-help promotion component usually suffered". *(Segerström & Törngård, 1990, p 5)*

Instead of burdening the DCs with the additional task of recruiting outreach workers (namely, volunteers) in the camps, the master trainers decided to take it on themselves, with help from their interpreters. This speeded up recruitment and "helped to ensure that the community-based activities would not be buried by... other tasks". This system for training individuals and teams of volunteers worked well "for districts far from Peshawar, and/or where few NGOs are working, (i.e. the most 'vulnerable' camps)". *(Segerström & Törngård, 1990, p 5)*

A "substantive modification of the original planning" is mentioned in the Plan of Action for Pakistan and Afghanistan 1990-92 prepared by the Rädda Barnen office in Peshawar. This was that, instead of aiming at "the mere transmission

of organising or social work skills", the training of volunteers aimed at "promoting action in the camps". *(p 12)* This, naturally, also has implications when it comes to measuring the results (e.g. numbers of self-help groups started rather than volunteers trained).

CULTURAL OBJECTIONS

In the second quarter of 1991, trained community volunteers began organizing themselves "to advocate for the needs of disabled children, to give support and encouragement to each other, and to share and develop their experiences... In one camp, the volunteers have established a centre from where they present themselves to aid organizations that come to the camp. The idea has already spread to other camps and groups of community volunteers". *(Bartle & Segerström, 1991, p 7)*

Training refugees and helping them to decide on and implement their own activities was a logical extension of the work of training the DCs, and gave practical expression to theories of community participation and self-help. At first, before the Training Unit began, the plan (Kerstin Karlén's) had been to select married Afghan couples as outreach workers, as a way to gain access to the women refugees. But this ran up against strong cultural objections: an Afghan husband and wife are seldom if ever seen working together, and an Afghan wife does not normally show herself to men outside the family or move beyond the compound.

So the social workers concentrated on winning over the male Afghan leaders to the advantages of community self-help. The first camp committees – all male, naturally – composed of teachers, elders, religious and community leaders plus representatives from different tribes, concerned themselves with all the social needs of the community. In consultation with the DCs, these social welfare committees (SWCs), as they were called, decided on what activities were needed, selected refugees for training, and discussed problems and ideas with the professional social workers, but retained the power of decision themselves.

SWCs were created in several camps in 1989-90 and spread slowly to others: by the end of 1991 there were about 150 of them in the 250 NWFP camps. A strength of this initiative was that it followed the pattern of decision-making models in Afghanistan, such as the *jirga,* which has a similar composition.

First to be trained were normally members of the social welfare committee, who then started up self-help groups, especially child support groups for children with special needs – the Rädda Barnen programme's primary target group. The first child group began in January, 1990, with 8 children and by end 1991 had 24 and was divided into two parts. The most popular type of children's support group was that to help disabled children, often those stricken with polio – "the most common reason for handicap among Afghan children", according to social services officer Annika Jansson. *(Third Newsletter from Pakistan to Rädda Barnen local branches.)*

The dedication of Aghan men to helping disabled children in their community was very impressive, according to Eva Segerström: "In many cases they cared about children with disabilities in a way you hardly see men in Western countries do". Håkan Törngård came to specialize in work with the disabled, first in Pakistan, later also in Afghanistan.

REACHING THE WOMEN

Up to that time, efforts to reach Afghan refugee women had often antagonised the male leaders and NGO personnel had been thrown out of the camps; some received threats, others were attacked. The head of the largest NGO in Peshawar, a US secular organization, received a death threat. The head of another NGO with a women's counselling programme was shot at while driving through Peshawar and his agency's premises looted. A group of armed refugees led by a *mullah* told UNHCR and CAR to drop their plans for starting a girls' school, and demonstrated at the premises proposed for the school as a warning to potential teachers and pupils. The message was

clear: any initiative that lacked approval by religious and community leaders was doomed.

The need for income-earning capacity among the refugees was greatest of all, of course, among the "vulnerables", especially the women and children, most of whom were unregistered. They depended on relatives' charity and NGO handouts for survival. To train them, however, could not be done discretely – it had to be done openly, with the approval of *mullahs* and *maliks*, in the women's compounds.

The new master trainer, Eva Segerström, was determined to find a way to "jump over the mud walls of the compound" so as to involve Afghan women in community development, and help equip them with income-earning skills.* She first tried unsuccessfully to reach vulnerable women in the camps with the help of three Afghan women teachers. She had all three work with her for short periods as potential trainers but admits that "it just didn't work". One was a city-dweller from Kabul, and therefore was not trusted by the majority from the countryside; the second could not speak Pashto; and the husband of the third would not let her go on field trips.

At that time it was virtually impossible to find educated Afghan women who might be trained to become trainers. Afghan staff at the Training Unit need to speak Dari (the Afghan national language), Pashto and English. Very, very few Afghan women speak all three. Also, even supposing one or two had been found, they would not have been allowed to travel between the camps and stay away overnight without having a male relative with them.

The problems and failures described above made the social workers' eventual success all the more dramatic, and demonstrated that winning the confidence of Afghan men was a successful way of reaching women. Word-of-mouth recommendation of the Training Unit produced a clamour of demands. Men who had gone through training came back to the Unit and asked for their womenfolk to be trained. *Maliks* asked: "Why don't you do anything for our women?" This, explains Eva Segerström, was how "reaching children through the women and reaching the women through the men" became the strategy; it was not a question of applying a previously worked-out theory.

It was also the background to recruitment of female DCs (to train women refugees) and creation in the camps of female social welfare committees, composed typically of older women and the wives of male leaders. The older women not only had more freedom of movement than younger, *purdah*-bound women, they were often willing to stand up to the men in defence of female interests. They were thus important in helping self-help projects to get started among women refugees, in liaising with the social workers, sorting out problems and maintaining social work in the village-camps.

When results began to be evident, a great deal of the scepticism of social work and help-to-self-help among aid agencies dissipated and gave way to praise for the Training Unit and all its works. The district coordinators, more experienced and more confident, had earned the respect of their superiors and colleagues; and by now, their cars that had caused such envy were older and worn.

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* The idea of Aghan refugee women contributing to household income was not quite so revolutionary as it may sound. According to Hanne Christensen: "The phenomenom of women working for income is quite widespread... and most of them have developed their own employment discreetly, without involving the community." She states that there were about 64,500 women in the female work force, a figure based on a Pakistan government figure of 2.6 million registered refugees. Of this total, the vast majority (about 62,800) were self-employed, 1,300 worked as casual labourers and around 400 were in permanent employment, mainly in the health sector of the refugee operation. "The majority of the self-employed women were 25-50 years old, but substantial numbers of girls aged 12-17 years and elderly women assist in paid self-employment. In most cases , the women earned very little – on average less than Rs. 100 or about 8 dollars per month – but 5 per cent of them earned enough to support an average-sized family." *(Christensen, 1990, pps 19-20 and p 28)*

REACHING THE TRIBAL AREAS

Demand for education and instruction in the theory and practice of community development began to come from a number of organizations involved with the refugees in Pakistan. New courses for government and NGO officials, UNHCR field officers and others were introduced, in addition to those for Afghan volunteers as well as additional training for DCs.

But in 1990 social work still did not reach to all camps in NWFP or even to all areas. The DCs reported many vulnerable groups, including children with special needs (often mentally retarded or crippled with polio). The tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan were still out of reach: travel there, especially for foreign NGO aid workers, was unsafe. Another area without social workers was Balulchistan, due to lack of cooperation from the UNHCR sub-office there. (The social services officer seconded to the UNHCR sub-office in Quetta was withdrawn in 1990.)

It was with the idea of bringing self-help, including income-earning projects, to the tribal areas that a scheme for training young Afghan animators was conceived. The details were worked out between Häkan Törngård and Margaret Sinclair of UNHCR, who encouraged, monitored and supervised NGO income-earning projects for vulnerable groups of refugees, especially widows. As it was full-time employment deserving regular remuneration, the animators were paid from the start, by UNHCR, both during their training and (at least in theory) afterwards. The first animators' training, which covered a period of 12 months, from February 1991 to February 1992, took place at the Training Unit and a group of refugee village-camps.

Information supplied by the DCs about those in the camps was invaluable to the income-generating exercise, according to Margaret Sinclair. Summing up achievements *(Sinclair, 1991)*, she gives credit to the DCs for making it possible to reach vulnerable refugees with income-earning projects: "There has of course been the intention of targeting assistance in most projects, but the practical difficulties are considerable. The situation has much improved since the projects have been able to work in cooperation with the Social Welfare Cell..." A package including training was often needed for disabled men and needy women "before they could benefit from these schemes." *(p 20)*

Despite strict *purdah,* many families allowed women "to participate in home-based schemes... administered by women. Arrangements are often made for work to be given out, and finished work paid for, in the home of a female 'group leader' participating in the scheme. Some projects have also introduced women's centres, to which finished work is brought..."*(p 7)* "Where an institutional market can be identified but equipment is expensive, a production centre can be set up, again providing refugees with employment. Examples in Peshawar have included the IRC Printing Press, now staffed and managed entirely by Afghan refugees, and printing hundreds of thousands of school textbooks." *(p 9)*

Later, in 1992, a new group of animators were recruited from arrivals in Peshawar from the Afghan capital. They were successful in motivating their fellow urban, educated refugees to start a number of projects for and with children as well as others that addressed the needs of the community as a whole, such as self-help clinics and sanitation programmes, as well as income-generating schemes.

NEW PHASE BEGINS

Another round of staff changes that occurred in 1991 heralded a new phase in the life of the Training Unit. Eva Segerström, having finished her two-year contract, left and was not replaced. Instead, in a move intended then to prepare for the day when the training would be done, and the Unit run, only by Afghans and Pakistanis, the title of master trainer was abolished. Håkan Törngård had a short period as training adviser before transferring to a new project, Disabled Afghans Project (DAP), in which Rädda Barnen participates.



PHOTO: UNHCR/20041/01.1990/A.HOLLMAN

Two new positions were created: manager of the Unit, filled by a Pakistani civil servant, Raymond Williams, and training adviser, filled by a Swedish woman social worker, Wiiu Lillesaar. The manager resigned in July, 1993 and was not replaced, leaving the training adviser with day-to-day management duties.

Jörgen Persson replaced Phil Bartle in January 1993 as Country Representative. Wiiu Lillesaar ended her contract and left at the end of 1994 and the Rädda Barnen Board finally decided to close down the Training Unit at the end of 1996.

Despite the success of the social workers in winning over numbers of Afghan male leaders to community self-help, they did not by any means overcome all opposition. As late as 1993 there were "*maliks* and elders who refuse any female training and who look upon child group activities as a kind of Christian mission which should be prohibited by all means". *(Lillesaar, 1993, p 5)*

Changing emphases and strategies in Rädda Barnen's international programme also affected the work of the Unit. Policy decisions at the end of the 1980s to work primarily with Third World NGOs as partners, only exceptionally with governments, and to have Rädda Barnen staff implement programmes only where absolutely necessary (as in Pakistan), identified the Training Unit as an exception – and therefore not central to the work of the organization. This was reflected in only short-term commitments by headquarters to continue the Pakistan programme.

Rädda Barnen was also an exception among NGOs in that it stayed on in Pakistan, whereas many others had left by 1991-92.

For the master trainers their guiding principle was that the Training Unit must be flexible enough to meet changing needs articulated by the refugees' representatives. These needs included preparation for repatriation and changes in priority among self-help options. In decisions about repatriation, as on other important matters, the *mullahs* were of major importance – but not all-powerful. (Their considerations were strongly influenced by the fluctuating fortunes of one or the other of the *mujahidin* factions they supported.) Afghan womenfolk, whose voice in family matters counts for a lot, also played an important role in decisions about repatriation, according to Cecilia Ryberg.

External events, of course, especially those in Afghanistan, affected hopes and expectations of repatriation:

- withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989 raised false expectations of rapid repatriation;
- during the Gulf War early in 1991 pro-Iraq, anti-US sentiment ran high, and those foreign aid workers left even wondered if it would force them out of the country;
- the fall of the Soviet-backed Najibullah regime in April 1992, followed by a flood of repatriation in the following three months, emptied some of the refugee settlements but still left some 2 million Afghans in Pakistan;
- a new influx of educated, urban refugees from Kabul were associated with the fallen regime and therefore did not mix with the "old" refugees;
- factional fighting among the *mujahidin* made it unsafe to return, so repatriation virtually dried up by 1993, while refugees, including city dwellers from the capital, continued to enter Pakistan. The influx did not slow down until New Year, 1994, when the Pakistan government closed the border. Even so, another 30,000 or so managed to bribe or otherwise infiltrate their way into Pakistan in the following few months.

Results

What was the impact of the work of the Training Unit? This chapter discusses notable results and attempts to group them in a way helpful to future aid agency work with refugees. Results are taken to include lessons learnt. They are looked at overall and from different angles: e.g. how they affected a group of village-camps; and what they have to say to Rädda Barnen, UNHCR and other aid agencies. Some concluding comments end the chapter.

WHAT IS INTERESTING TO KNOW?

Results of the Rädda Barnen Training Unit range from output of the Unit (numbers trained in various categories) to impact of the work on aid agencies, including UNHCR and Rädda Barnen itself, to benefits of resulting self-help projects, including benefits to women and children.

As far as overall impact is concerned, there seems little doubt that results have been positive and appreciated by the refugee communities they touched. The 1991 evaluation, for example, concluded that "in spite of all the organizational problems... in the beginning, especially the lack of objectives and terms of reference, the programme has generally been a success". *(Bloxom, 1991, p 32)*

The 1993 evaluation states unequivocally that in the relatively poor camps, RBTU training has made "a dramatic change", which is "seen in the many activities started within the camps and sustained by peoples' initiatives". *(Mahlasela et al, 1993, p 57)*

It would be interesting for Rädda Barnen, of course, to know how many vulnerable children benefited, and in what ways. But this is the area with the weakest information. No study or report so far provides much solid detail about specific benefits to refugee children. Nor has any attempt apparently been made to provide a cost/benefit analysis of the work. (Costs are not an aspect of this report, but are reported in Annex V, while some considerations in assessing results are discussed in Annex VI.)

What can be said about what is interesting to know is determined largely by available data, which has a number of gaps and inconsistencies. Different sources of data tend not to accord with each other, and, even taken together, fail to provide a comprehensive picture of results since 1988, when the Training Unit started, to the present day.

WHAT IS REASONABLE TO EXPECT?

There were some 250 village-camps in NWFP with 1.5-3.5 million people (according to when the count was made: repatriation, new inflows and returnees affected the numbers) and only half a dozen trainers, a score or so each of DCs and animators, and at most 300 volunteers. If impact on the whole refugee community in Pakistan is considered, results are bound to seem insignificant.

How did the Training Unit's achievements compare with those of other NGOs? Here again we are short of information: there is little material on what other aid agencies in Pakistan have achieved, as a basis for comparison. Rädda Barnen's Representative in Pakistan, Jörgen Persson, who has worked for 20 years in the region, believes the standard of achievement by NGOs working with refugees in NWFP is generally low, due largely to the difficult social and cultural environment. He also offers a plausible reason for scarcity of documentation: "Few organizations are so masochistic that they expose themselves to independent evaluations when the conditions are so tough."

The value of services for the refugees can not be assessed only on the basis of what they provided;

the incidental benefits were also important sometimes. One of the big problems, especially for women, was boredom – it was found that some 60 per cent of women waiting in line at health clinics had "nothing wrong" with them; they gathered there to meet each other and talk. Because *purdah* was stricter in exile than in Afghanistan, visits to the clinic presented their only chance, outside the compound, to socialize.

Another, important consideration concerns the negative effect of aid handouts on promotion of self-help. RBTU training was appreciated more, and led to more self-help, in camps that received little or no material aid (mostly those in the south). Motivation to work with disabled children was stronger there. Also, women were "more vocal" and "practised what they had learned through RBTU training". In the camps in the north and around Peshawar, "donors had destroyed people's initiative and created dependency... While internal solutions were the first resort in the south, the north tended to opt for a search for external funding as a first measure". *(Mahlasela et al, 1993, p 62)*

Finally, there is the undeniable fact that doing social work among Afghan refugees in Pakistan is tough. The society is difficult to work in, there are many needs and a built-in distrust of Western ideas and views.

WHO AND HOW MANY WERE TRAINED?

Data from different sources provide numbers of district coordinators, community volunteers and animators trained at different times and in different years. In theory, adding up figures for different years would give totals of how many in each category were trained. Unfortunately, the data are not always comparable: the basis for record-keeping seems to have changed over the years, so a complete picture of the Training Unit's output does not emerge, nor how many men and how many women were trained and, as far as volunteers were concerned, from which camps they came.

The following table has been compiled mainly from a table in Lonela Bloxom's 1991 evaluation. Her figures for the year 1991, which covered only the first three months of that year, have been replaced with figures covering all the year, from a paper dated 24/11/91 by Phil Bartle and Eva Segerström ("A Community Self-Help Approach: Afghan Refugee Children in Pakistan").

Training Unit output (number of trainees) 1988-91

	1988	1989	1990	1991
Trainers (3) & assisant trainers (4)				7
SWC District Coordinators	13	23	25	27
Community Volonteers		7	179	180 *
Volunteers from Other NGOs				185 **
SW Committee Members	71	128	27	122
Civil servantrs, UN & NGO officials		224	80	281
Animators			20	
Totals:	**84**	**382**	**351**	**802**

*of which 14 females **of which 68 females

NOTE: The number of training days varied over the years, also according to which category trainees belonged. The animators in principle had up to 12 months' training, while community volunteers received only 4-20 days (social welfare committee members usually more than the others). Volunteers from other NGOs, also civil servants, UN and NGO officials normally had courses of 1-8 days at the Training Unit. ***Sources:*** *Bloxom, 1991, p 44 and Bartle & Segerström (B), 1991, pps 3-4.*

How many trainees, and how many in each category of the foregoing table, were trained in 1992 and 1993 is not clear from available data. The Unit's annual report dated 17/1/94 describes the categories differently in its account of **1993 output**, as follows:

- About **300 females** received basic general awareness training on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (related to the Koran), children's needs, an introduction to community- based self-help, and motivating women for action.

- About **100 teachers and female CVs** received training in non-formal education for school-age children, e.g. ways to prevent health problems, further the wellbeing of other children, develop self-confidence, improve their own situation at school, and so on.

- 22 **animators** from two Disabled Afghan Projects (DAPs) in Afghanistan were trained at RBTU in community work techniques.

- 5 **newly-appointed animators** received a one-week introductory training, plus 5 weeks' training in employment support for the disabled, community participation, and production of awareness-raising material.

- **DAP supervisors**, project managers and trainers received four days' training in supervision.

- Jointly with an NGO, SERVE, and the International Labour Office, RBTU gave 3 weeks' comprehensive introductory training to **members of a newly-started DAP** in Balkh (Afghanistan).

- **Eight new female DCs** received short-term training.

- **10 urban animators** received training to promote community-based self-help activities among newly-arrived refugees, mainly from Kabul. Their training included ways to bridge the gap between new arrivals, long-standing refugees and the local population. The Training Unit provided classroom training and gave field supervision jointly with DCs so as to assess further training needs.

- A group of **social animators** from the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF), a Pakistani NGO, started training at RBTU for the first time in 1993.

WHO AND HOW MANY BENEFITED?

The following discussion of benefits resulting from the Rädda Barnen programme is broken down into four sub-sections, each of which concerns a particular category of beneficiary: refugees, Rädda Barnen, UNHCR, and NGOs generally.

This discussion, however, does not take into account benefits gained by the Pakistani district coordinators and Afghan animators, who, as well as having paid employment, learnt methods and techniques of social work that increased their income-earning skills.

(i) benefits to the refugees

Identification of vulnerable groups by the DCs allowed both material goods and services, as well as promotion of self-help schemes, to better reach those most in need, who included children in vulnerable households.

Child support groups were a popular self-help activity, though the number of groups seems to have remained low. Among these groups, those for children with disability were one of the commonest. Widows in particular benefited from **income-earning projects.**

The first child support group began in January 1990, with eight children; by the end of 1991 it had 24 children and had split into two parts. At that time there were seven groups and another nine were due to start up before the end of that year. Figures for 1992 are not available. As for 1993, only one group began that year (among refugees who did not expect to repatriate).

Thanks

A number of people, notably those interviewed, gave generously of their time to assist in the preparation of this report, and a few of them also commented in detail on different drafts of the text. None of them, however, shares responsibility for any errors of fact that might be found, for which the author must take the blame.

What was the impact of the work of the Training Unit in the individual **village-camps**? It would have been useful to indicate on a map of North-West Frontier Province those camps with district coordinators, animators, social welfare committees and active self-help groups, today and in previous years. Such data, unfortunately, are not available.

The most up-to-date statistics are those provided by Wiiu Lillesaar (see table below).

The Mahlasela evaluation is almost the only source of relatively recent **detailed information from the village-camps.** Joy Mahlasela's collaborators, Shirin Persson and Carl von Rosen, visited 11 camps (3 in the North, 2 in the central Peshawar area and 6 in the South) in 1993 to discover the impact of RBTU training. Their report, which was abbreviated and incorporated into the evaluation, is further summarized below:

– **Munda camp** is a collection of seven village-camps that is one of the oldest around Peshawar (created in1980). After repatriation in 1992 – about 70 per cent of the refugees returned home and 20 per cent integrated with the local population – 36,000 families were reduced to 2,000 and amalgamated into 2 camps. Until then, despite drug abuse and trade in illegal weapons, social work stemming from RBTU training was considerable.

A male and a female DC each received 18 months' training starting in 1990, 40 female CVs in 1991 and a further 30 in 1993. (Previously, 11 male CVs were trained in 1988, before the RBTU became fully operational.) Three male camp committees and one female committee were created. Activities included 5 child-to-child groups, 3 male and 1 female IK groups, 2 disabled children's groups, informal schools for girls, 2 adult literacy groups among the women and 9 among the men. Close monitoring and interaction with the community by the two DCs helped to sustain all activities until repatriation began in1992.

After the refugees opted to return home, most activities ended, but exchanges of experience between repatriated CVs working within Afghanistan and the DCs at the camp continued. Three of the male CVs are members of the Afghan association working with children inside Afghanistan.

– At **Azakheel camp,** also in the Central area, refugees – fresh arrivals from Kabul – were found to be "increasingly passive and dependent" because donor funding had been easy to come by. A number of families who opted to live and work in Peshawar visited the camp only to collect their rations. The men here (who had been serving in the lower ranks of the administration, police and military) "tended to exaggerate poverty and helplessness of their wives, hoping to attract further donor attention".

Social Activities in Old Refugee Villages as of September 1994

	Number	Male	Female
Social welfare committees	178	127	51
Child-to-child groups	53	30	23
Community volunteers	257	257	
Child support groups	8		
Child sports groups	11		
IK groups	63	61	2

Source: letter to author from Wiiu Lillesaar, 1994

Relations between the male DC and the male social welfare committee were formal and top-down (the DC "steered the committee on what to discuss in our presence"). Both male and female DCs lacked practical training in community development. House visits among the women revealed a seven-strong female committee and various self-help (including income-generating) projects – all initiated by the female DC. A number of the female refugees were teachers.

– At **Chakdara camp**, the dependency syndrome was also evident: "Even tasks like covering up stangant pools of water and building latrines would not be undertaken without payment". Programmes such as the RBTU training that do not offer money, goods or services received little support here.

The refugees were integrated into the local economy and managed much of the area's trade; lucrative cross-border smuggling was another source of income. There had been women's groups for 8 months but they ceased when the Training Unit stopped paying the volunteers (an "incentive" of Rs 300 each per month after training). There were schools for boys and girls, though facilities were poor at the girls' schools, funded by CAR, which also provided books and clothes.

Women volunteers who worked without payment were targets of ridicule and suspicion: one female CV said she was considered the district coordinator's concubine and was suspected of receiving secret benefits. "Today there are no female acitivities. Some disabled child groups under male CVs are still functioning, though sustaining this activity with no remuneration is becoming sincreasingly difficult". There was a feeling that "the present RBTU trainers lack practical experience of realities within the camps, to be able to meet new demands and to act as discussion partners".

– At **Gandaf camp**, where refugees find employment with drug barons, the concept and relevance of child groups has "not been understood". But proximity to urban areas make the men more tolerant towards female literacy; they asked for a secondary school for girls.

Since 1990, 14 male CVs have received RBTU training; they take initiatives independent of the male SW committee and "want training in how to come to terms with the dependency syndrome, which was the biggest problem for them in this camp".

– At **Baghicha camp**, there were child-to-child activities in boys' and girls' schools: about 40 boys and 20 girls spread health awareness messages among school stay-aways. Each child kept an activity record, but there was no parental involvement and teachers "sometimes coerced by use of the whip". A child group had 13 disabled children. (Epilepsy, polio, mental retardation, Downs syndrome and physical handicaps were found to be common.)

– At **Bushera camp**, there was a sharp drop-out rate at the boys' school after the fourth class: "Children seem to start work already at the age of 9 years to support their families". The refugees are engaged in small trade and business, importing fruits and vegetables from across the border. The camp is in the tribal areas and *maliks* exert strong control over the refugees. (The camp committee consists of 20 *maliks*.)

The male and female DCs, both RBTU-trained, adopted different working strategies in conformity with conservative traditions: while the man liaises with the *jirga* , the woman "observes strict *purdah* and closely interacts with the women within the precincts of their home. This has gained her acceptance and appreciation by the men, thereby ensuring access to the women".

Two male CVs trained by RBTU in 1991 initiated IK activities among the boys. A female SW committee formed in 1992 received RBTU training that year. There was a child group with disabled children (polio and mental retardation) and an IK group for girls in the girls' primary school had been functioning for a year. A close parent/teacher

relationship existed in the girls' school and IK activities were encouraged by the mothers.

– At **Satin 2 camp,** a "highly motivated" male CV linked people to resources available within the camp and was keen to teach his fellow refugees to help themselves instead of begging for outside help. A female CV and all the social welfare committee members received RBTU training and this encouraged them to discuss children's and personal health problems openly.

A female DC has trained four other women in child-to-child activities and IK activities were revived in 1992 by a trained CV; members motivated children to attend school, identify disabled children and disseminate messages on health, sanitation and drug abuse. Unfortunately, the IK volunteer "commanded the boys rather than discussed with them".

– From **Qutub Khel camp,** 100 families repatriated but about one-third returned to live outside the camp. A male SW committee met weekly to discuss general camp problems; there was an IK group with a trained leader and 10 disabled students have received training in tailoring, masonry and carpentry. Following a CAR directive, families collected food rations personally instead of via the *maliks*. Women used to get loans for goat farming but stopped when repayment became a burden.

– At **Derpa Khal camp,** two trained male CVs led five IK groups at the boys' school. A male SW committee representing people from all tribal groups in the camp started a self-help school for boys with two voluntary, unpaid teachers. RBTU trained 20 women CVs for three days on subjects such as childbirth, hygiene and nutrition. Awareness about the needs of disabled children has increased and attitudes towards them became more humane.

– At **Naridaq camp,** a self-help school with 70 boys and three teachers existed, with RBTU supplying stationery and CAR text books. Parents contributed Rs 20 monthly for each child toward teachers' salaries. A group for 10 disabled children resulted from RBTU training of a volunteer group leader. The male social welfare committee saw their trained women as motivators and promoters of change for other, nearby camps.

(ii) benefits to Rädda Barnen

The most obvious and notable benefit to Rädda Barnen was the experience gained in working directly and indirectly with refugees, testing methods and techniques – learning by doing, in fact. Once the Pakistan experience has been analysed and digested internally, the organisation will be in a better position to say which parts are relevant to present and future work elsewhere. Among aspects that seem open to **replication** (with or without adaptation) are:

- the triumvirate approach: for a Rädda Barnen team to work jointly with a United Nations body and a unit of the host country's government in developing methods and techniques of community-based social work to reach those in a group of refugees who are most in need, and promote self-help activities among them;
- the specific Rädda Barnen contribution to such a triumvirate focuses on training of social workers drawn from personnel of the host country, UNHCR and other aid agencies as well as from among the refugees themselves;
- reaching children and *purdah*-bound women in a Muslim society through cooperation with male leadership and sensitivity to their culture and traditions;
- combating common refugee problems – ranging from psycho-social needs of children to boredom and aid-dependency – with community-based self-help activities;
- teaching the contents of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to Muslim families by relating it to the teachings of the Koran.



PHOTO: UNHCR/12385/D.A. GIULIANOTTI

(iii) benefits to UNHCR

- Information about refugees in village-camps supplied by district coordinators enabled UNHCR to target material aid and services to vulnerable groups and thus increase the quality and effectiveness of its assistance. (Targeting became increasingly important as UNHCR began restricting aid to "vulnerables" only.)

- Rädda Barnen's secondment of social workers to UNHCR and creation of the Training Unit increased its knowledge and expertise in social work and added a new component – community-based self-help – to UNHCR's range of refugee assistance in Pakistan.

(iv) benefits to NGOs generally

- the demonstrated success of Rädda Barnen's training of refugees for self-help in Pakistan helped to further this approach among NGOs and to overcome prejudice against it; and courses for NGO field staff helped spread expertise in community-based techniques;

- Improved aid targeting, made possible by Rädda Barnen-trained district coordinators, helped NGOs to discriminate in favour of vulnerable refugees in greatest need of their goods and services.

WHICH TRAINING HAD MOST IMPACT?

This is not a question that is addressed in the documentation. A number of opinions about the effectiveness of the training on different categories of trainees emerged from interviews, but they must be considered subjective views of the individuals concerned.

For instance, **district coordinators** are widely considered to have made good results possible, by successfully identifying vulnerable groups. As master trainer Eva Segerström points out, "they had the toughest job of all", while Margaret Sinclair of UNHCR considers the information they supplied (with help of informants in the village-camps) was crucial to targeting income-earning projects to those who needed them most.

The **animators,** recruited almost wholly from among the refugees, have been singled out for a high proportion of the praise for the Training Unit's achievements coming from UNHCR and others, including the 1993 evaluators. For example, as Mahlasela points out: "Animators have been of immense importance in sustaining programmes in the southern camps. They have been vital links between DCs and camp level activities". *(p 63)* More detail is given earlier: the presence of full-time trained animators is described as a special feature of the camps in the politically sensitive and conservative southern tribal areas, where they are said to have made "an immense contribution". *(Mahlasela et al, 1993, p 53)*

The training of **women volunteers in the village-camps achieved the Training Unit's most positive results**, in the opinion of Eva Segerström. Cecilia Ryberg agrees that "training of Afghans in general and women volunteers in particular is the main achievement". Margaret Sinclair also praises **the Training Unit staff** for giving direction and professional input to a range of NGO projects that UNHCR coordinated.

LESSONS LEARNT BY THOSE INVOLVED

Several of those directly involved in the programme or evaluations of it have stated what lessons they consider they learnt from it.

(1) Extract from paper by Bartle and Segerström, 1991, p 4:*

- The programme of training for community action is an effective way to develp human resources in a refugee community, where the refugees themselves are their own greatest resource.
- A community-based approach is "messy" in that planning is more difficult, actions slower to implement, results more difficult to quantify and the process less easy to measure, than in a relief or service provision approach. This is a social process rather than a finite project.
- Scepticism on the part of local administrators, some planners, and many administrators of agencies set up for relief rather than development, is the biggest constraint to developing such a process.
- A practical approach, and concrete results, have to be clearly set as objectives, and seen as results, for this process to survive and grow.
- Once such barriers are overcome, this approach is recommended as the most practical, action-effective and cost-effective approach to providing a number of services, including meeting the psychological needs of refugee children.

(2) Extract from Lonela Bloxom evaluation (1991, pps 26-27):

- Social welfare committees are important models as implementing bodies in promoting communal self-help activities in a refugee situation.
- Illiterate Afghan refugees can do social work in the camps and help to promote community work.
- Training of civil servants and NGO field workers from various agencies made possible the coordination of various activities in support of the refugees.

(* Some points made here are also made in the Bloxom paper)

(3) Extract from interviews and correspondence with Eva Segerström:

- What has sometimes been criticised as the ad hoc nature of the training was deliberate and necessary: it had to be flexible so as to respond to changing needs articulated by the refugees themselves.

- Evaluation should be a built-in component of a programme (with clarity about why, who, what and for whom to evaluate).

- Administration must not be neglected; it requires staff, expertise, routines and procedures that are clear to everyone.

- A community-based approach, and the nature of the society, demand that the initiator of the process work with representatives of the community, not with individual children*.

(4) Extract from paper by Håkan Törngård, 2/7/91:

- Group-oriented activities are more appropriate to the culture than individually-oriented treatment. (In Pushtun society the family and its security and obligations dominate.)

- A psycho-therapeutic treatment for a child can, in some cases, be in contradiction with a group-oriented activity for the same child.

- We have to be very careful to spell out exactly what we mean by such words as community development, social work, aid, community participation, development, community work when we develop our projects, select our cooperation partners, report to our head office, and recruit new staff.

Nearly all those interviewed pointed out that much trouble could have been avoided if things had been handled better from the outset by Rädda Barnen headquarters in Stockholm, which seemed remote from the realities and problems of its Training Centre in Pakistan.

A FINAL COMMENT

It required vision, determination and courage to think up, plan and introduce a largely unknown concept – community-based self-help – into refugee operations in Pakistan in the 1980s. The success of the Training Unit demonstrated, especially to sceptics in the local aid community, that the concept is valid. With this achievement, Rädda Barnen's decision to provide training rather than, say, material aid, or merely to continue its secondment of social workers to UNHCR, seems to be vindicated, and its aim of influencing UNHCR in favour of community-based social work achieved.

The combination of targeting vulnerable groups and training them for self-help was shown to be a viable strategy in Pakistan, and possibly other refugee situations as well. Although the number of refugees who benefited is hard to establish, it is clear there were direct and indirect benefits to many Afghan children. Also, that scores of Afghan women benefited from training in social work and income-earning activities, which will stand them and their families and communities in good stead – whether or not they repatriate.

There are also lessons to be learnt from combining distribution of essential goods and services with promotion and training for self-help. The two do not always go well together. Food, water, sanitation and medical services for the needy may be vital, but refugees are not usually all destitute or vulnerable by definition; it is necessary to identify those who are and then target them for distribution of material aid. If those controlling refugee camps are corrupt, this

* This point is also made by Cecilia Ryberg and Håkan Törngård. Phil Bartle stresses that the importance of the Training Unit "was not mainly in training in social work but in promoting self-help". He considers the Unit "did an excellent job of supporting (more than simply training)" the district coordinators.

may involve supporting people on the spot who are able to stand up to them and ensure a measure of justice.

Help-to-self-help, which also reinforces the refugees' dignity and sense of community, is something that has little or no interest to camps saturated with material handouts. The compatibility of help-to-self-help with *untargeted* distribution of handouts can not therefore be taken for granted.

The main shortcomings of the Rädda Barnen programme in Pakistan are related to the way the details of the original plan were worked out between the headquarters of UNHCR in Geneva and of Rädda Barnen in Stockholm, without adequate involvement of those who drew up the plan or those directly responsible for making it work. Most of the conflicts that occurred might have been prevented (or at least lessened) if the principle of participation in planning and decision-making had been followed and problems dealt with as they arose, rather than being left, unresolved, to fester.

Factors contributing to problems included inadequate knowledge among Rädda Barnen staff about how UNHCR works and a wavering commitment to the work by headquarters, combined with bad management and organization of the Training Unit. While the triumvirate approach was appropriate to the situation, implications of this arrangement – in particular, its potential for causing conflict – were not considered carefully enough, or discussed adequately with those who would have to bear the consequences of it.

Despite problems and conflicts, however, most of those closely involved with Rädda Barnen's work in Pakistan are convinced it successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of training for community-based self-help in meeting the social needs of refugees, including refugee children.

Postscript

People fleeing factional fighting in the Afghan capital in recent months have created enormous new camps of displaced people around Jalalabad, a city east of Kabul near the border with Pakistan. Aid workers from the Norwegian Refugee Council and Norwegian Church Aid appealed for help to the Rädda Barnen Training Unit in Peshawar. Between July and October 1994 an RBTU team has trained people selected by camp committees for coummunity-based social work among the displaced families.

Those trained organized 700 self-help groups at Sarshahi camp affecting some 14,000 children – mostly play groups for the younger children and schools and leisure groups for the older ones.

Other camps have appealed for similar training and more RBTU teams are expected to go into Afghanistan this year. This means that, once again, the life of the Training Unit may be extended and the decision to close it at the end of 1996 reconsidered.

Annex 1: Staff mentioned in this report

i) Expatriates

Kerstin Karlén (October 1985 to March 1988, on secondment to UNHCR sub-office in Peshawar) In 1990, as a consultant, she made an evaluation of the work of the Training Unit for Rädda Barnen.

Erica Lundström (January 1988 to January 1990, on secondment to UNHCR sub-office in Peshawar)

Håkan Törngård (April 1988 to June 1992), one of the first two master trainers sent to Pakistan to set up the Rädda Barnen Training Unit. Though he ceased working as a master trainer in June 1992, he continued as a training adviser to the Manager of the Training Unit, then as a consultant with the Disabled Afghan Project (DAP), in which Rädda Barnen is a partner, both in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Anitha Rönström (April 1988 to May 1989), the second of the first two master trainers, left Rädda Barnen abruptly after a disagreement with the organization.

Phil Bartle (May 1989 to December 1992), a Canadian, was team leader at the UNHCR sub- office in Peshawar, then Rädda Barnen Representative in Pakistan.

Eva Segerström (July 1989 to June 1991) replaced Anitha Rönström and was for two years a master trainer at the Training Unit. She has since worked as a consultant for Rädda Barnen.

Cecilia Ryberg (November 1989 to June 1992, on secondment to UNHCR sub-office in Peshawar) She has since worked with UNHCR, in Belgrade and in Tanzania.

Annika Jansson (November 1989 to May 1992, on secondment to UNHCR sub-office in Peshawar)

Wiiu Lillesaar (September 1991-December 1994) worked as training adviser at the Training Unit and left at the end of her contract in December 1994.

Jörgen Persson succeeded Phil Bartle as Rädda Barnen Representative in Pakistan in January 1993.

(ii) Pakistani and Afghan professional staff of the Training Unit:

Shereen Niaz, a Pakistani teacher, was one of the first local staff hired for the Training Unit, as an interpreter/assistant. She became one of the first trainers and was still working as a deputy master trainer at the end of 1994.

Azatullah Asmut, an Afghan architectural student, was the first Afghan hired for the Training Unit, also as an interpreter/assistant. He became one of the first trainers and still worked as a deputy master trainer at the end of 1994.

Reginald Williams, a former Pakistani civil servant, was hired as Manager of the Training Unit in July 1991 and resigned in July, 1993.

Annex 2: Materials used in training*

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Social Services in Refugee Emergencies, UNHCR, PTSS 1991.

Training for Transformation, Books 1-3. A handbook for Community Workers by Anne Hope & Sally Timmel, Mambo Press, Zimbabwe, 1984.

Disabled Village Children by Dr David Werner, Hesperion Foundation, US, 1988.

Tools for Community Participation. A manual for Training Trainers in Participatory Techniques, by Lyra Srinavasan. Prowess/UNDP Technical Series, 1990.

Community Participation. Strategies and Tools. A trainer's manual for the rural water supply and sanitation sector in Pakistan. By Lyra Srinavasan, Roshaneh Zafar and K.M. Kinnatullah, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank, 1990.

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* From a list supplied by Eva Segerström

Annex 3: Source material

Interim Report of a Feasibility Study on the Establishment of Income-Generating Activities, primarily for Women, among Afghan Refugees in NWFP, Pakistan, by Inger W. Boesen, Danish Refugee Council, 1983.

Promoting Self-Help Solutions by Vulnerable Afghan Refugees in Pakistan: the Development of a Community Process. A report on the Rädda Barnen UNHCR Trust Fund (Programme of Assistance for Non-Material Needs) by Lonela Bloxom, August 1991.

Afghan Children, 1994, by Anitha Rönström, a case study presented at a workshop at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA, August 1994.

Study of Documents on Rädda Barnen Support to Afghan Refugees in Pakistan, 1983-1992, by Gunnel Bågenholm, March 1993.

An evaluation on Rädda Barnen Support to Afghan Refugees: Programmes initiated as a result of Rädda Barnen Training Unit, by Joy Mahlasela, Shirin Persson and Carl von Rosen, October, 1993.

Workplan: Community Volunteer Training, Rädda Barnen, Peshawar, 9/5/90.

Year End Report for 1990, Rädda Barnen, Peshawar, 17/2/91.

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UNHCR Activities Financed by Voluntary Funds: Report for 1993-1994 and Proposed Programmes and Budget for 1995. Part V: South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. Section 9: Pakistan. (Submitted by the High Commissioner). UNGA document A/AC.96/825/Par V/9, 10 August 1994.

The Reconstruction of Afghanistan: A Chance for Rural Afghan Women by Hanne Christensen, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Geneva, 1990.

Charity, Community Development, Child Advocacy: Some Personal Reflections, by Håkan Törngård, Rädda Barnen, 2/7/91.

Afghan Refugee Children in Pakistan: A Community-Focused Approach, by Phil Bartle & Eva Segerström, Rädda Barnen, 21/7/91. (A)

A Community Self-Help Approach: Afghan Refugee Children in Pakistan, by Phil Bartle & Eva Segerström, Rädda Barnen 24/11/91. (B)

A Community Self-Help Approach: Refugee Children in Pakistan, by Phil Bartle & Eva Segerström, ICCB-Children Worldwide -1/1992.

Project Self-Evaluation Report by Eva Segerström & Håkan Törngård, Rädda Barnen, Pakistan, Rädda Barnen, 29/1/90.

Quarterly Report: First Quarter January-March 1990, Rädda Barnen Pakistan, 20/4/90.

Quarterly Report: Second Quarter April-June 1990, Rädda Barnen Pakistan, 28/6/90.

Quarterly Report: Third Quarter July-September 1990, Rädda Barnen Pakistan, 1/10/90.

Plan of Action for Pakistan & Afghanistan 1990-1992, Rädda Barnen, Pakistan, 28/6/90.

Income-Generating Programmes for Vulnerable Groups: Some Experiences from Afghan Refugee Assistance Projects in Pakistan, by Margaret Sinclair, UNHCR/Rädda Barnen Special Report, 22/4/91.

UNHCR report (Pesh/NFF/94/099, 5/6/94 (Sector H. Community Services) by Pushkar Raj Bhattarai.

Training of Social Workers in NWFP, by Kerstin Karlén, UNHCR, 7/12/87.

Evaluation of Rädda Barnen Activities Among Afghan Refugees in Pakistan, by Kerstin Karlén, Rädda Barnen, 30/3/90.

Newsletters from Pakistan to Rädda Barnen local branches, Nos. 1-7 (October 1990 to November 1991), Rädda Barnen, Peshawar.

Rädda Barnen Pakistan Briefing Notes, by Phil Bartle, Peshawar, 18/9/89.

Project Self-Evaluation Report, by Håkan Törngård & Eva Segerström, Rädda Barnen, Pakistan, (undated, covering all of 1989).

Programme Proposal 1991, Rädda Barnen, Pakistan 29/8/90.

FALT by Wiiu Lillesaar, Rädda Barnen, Pakistan, 26/1/93.

Annual Report by Wiiu Lillesaar, Rädda Barnen, Pakistan, 17/1/94.

På Begäran: Några personliga kommentarer till utvärderingsrapporten beträffande flykting programmet i Pakistan (As Requested: Some Personal Comments to the Evaluation Report Concerning the Refugee Programme in Pakistan) by Jörgen Persson, (PM 1993 12 13/JP), Rädda Barnen, 13/12/93.

Annex 4: Persons interviewed

(a) in Sweden

Tomas Hildebrand
Wiiu Lillesaar
Kerstin Karlén
Jörgen Persson
Eva Segerström
Håkan Törngård

(b) in Switzerland

Phil Bartle*
Pushkar Raj Bhattarai (UNHCR)
Cecilia Ryberg (UNHCR)
Margaret Sinclair (UNHCR)

* Interviewed in Vancouver, Canada, by phone and fax

Annex 5: Costs

Attempts to provide the reader with the costs of setting up and running the Training Unit ran into problems. Among the causes were less-than-efficient keeping of accounts at the Unit; the changeover from one accounting system to another at headquarters in 1989; the use of a Trust Fund initially to channel funds to UNHCR for the Training Unit, which later drew on funds transferred direct to the Rädda Barnen office in Peshawar; and the fact that only some of the time and costs incurred by seconded social service staff and the Rädda Barnen Representative were spent on behalf of the Unit.

Rather than attempt to arrive at a figure of what the Training Unit has cost Rädda Barnen, this report – which in any case is not concerned with the cost aspect – presents on the following pages some of the available data, provided by the Finance Section of the Administrative Department at Rädda Barnen headquarters.

Contents

PAKISTAN

RBTU

OUTCOME PER YEAR (in SEK)	1988	1989				1990							
	UNHCR Social Workers 332200	UNHCR Social Workers 332200	Project prep. 332201	Advisors disabled children 332400	TOTAL	Planning 332200	UNHCR Soc. Work. Peshawar 332201	UNHCR Soc. Work. Quetta 332202	UNHCR Soc. Work. R B T U 332203	Grants to EIL 332204	Advisors disabled children 332400	Handicap Internation. Quetta 332401	TOTAL
Aid equipment	243	2.741			2.741			769					769
Grants rendered *)	788.743	1.056.443			1.056.443	333.282	300.000	130.000	340.000	205.975		646.000	1.955.257
Salary and other staff costs	988.971	1.610.392	300.000		1.910.392	528.324	731.229	149.283	600.755		164.101		2.173.691
Travel	295.933	505.503		1.302	506.806	166.041	67.107	20.136	55.915		116.383		425.582
Training	13.731	144.554			144.554			464					464
Office rent, furniture/equipm.	2.700	9.846			9.846								0
Stationary	3.134	12.312			12.312	700		216			5.655		6.571
Postage/telephone/telex	803	7.566		127	7.693	1.500		2.693			1.000		5.193
Vehicles					0	660		218					878
Freight/transportation	5.369	2.979			2.979	1.357							1.357
Newspapers, publications	5.721	567			567	196	69				679		944
Miscellaneous costs	33.554	38.017			38.017	10.121	9.654	4.029	12.847		4.727		41.378
Exchange rate difference	5.124	3.829			3.829	2.285	5.439		3.189				10.913
Planning and follow-up					0								0
TOTAL PROJECT COST	**2.144.026**	**3.394.749**	**300.000**	**1.429**	**3.696.178**	**1.044.465**	**1.113.498**	**307.808**	**1.012.706**	**205.975**	**292.545**	**646.000**	**4.622.996**

*) Grants rendered to UNHCR where not another organisation is stated in the heading

PAKISTAN

RBTU

OUTCOME PER YEAR (in SEK)	1991						1992				1993		
	UNHCR Soc. Work. Peshawar 332201	UNHCR Soc. Work. R B T U 332203	Grants to EIL 332204	Advisors disabled ch. UNOCA 332400	Handicap Internation. Quetta 332401	TOTAL	UNHCR Soc. Work. Peshawar 332201	UNHCR Soc. Work. R B T U 332203	Advisors disabled ch. 332400	TOTAL	Training unit 301000	Advisors disabled ch. 301100	TOTAL
Aid equipment						0				0			0
Grants rendered *)	369.278	569.263	121.338	173.339	174.488	1.407.705	(67.323)	1.180.049		1.112.726	936.620		936.620
Salary and other staff costs	737.691	775.037		383.872		1.896.600	528.558	451.020	701.474	1.681.052	948.925	494.386	1.443.311
Travel	188.532	196.370		15.057		399.958	128.157	68.247	111.094	307.498	89.820	212.057	301.877
Training	155	122.219				122.374	335		16.684	17.019			0
Office rent, furniture/equipm.		117.719				117.719	479	296		775			0
Stationary		32.788				32.788		21.728		21.728			0
Postage/telephone/telex		6.904				6.904		289		289			0
Vehicles		13.285				13.285		62.702		62.702			0
Freight/transportation						0		150		150			0
Newspapers, publications		123		519		642	129	43		172		350	350
Miscellaneous costs	11.080	30.756		7.714		49.551	29.377	4.193	8.086	41.656			0
Exchange rate difference	17.700	16.400		1.500		35.600	(100.000)	(100.431)	(110.000)	(310.431)	5.000	2.000	7.000
Planning and follow-up	111.666	66.000				177.667	77.732	157.818		235.550	226.009	133.199	359.208
TOTAL PROJECT COST	1.436.102	1.946.864	121.338	582.000	174.488	4.260.792	597.445	1.846.104	727.338	3.170.887	2.206.373	841.993	3.048.366

PAKISTAN

RBTU

OUTCOME PER YEAR (in SEK)	1994 Training unit 301000	1988-94 GRAND TOTAL
Aid equipment		3.753
Grants rendered *)	972.899	8.230.391
Salary and other staff costs	760.127	10.854.145
Travel	60.788	2.298.442
Training		298.142
Office rent, furniture/equipm.		131.041
Stationary		76.534
Postage/telephone/telex	345	21.227
Vehicles		76.864
Freight/transportation		9.855
Newspapers, publications		8.396
Miscellaneous costs	250	204.406
Exchange rate difference	(3.630)	(251.595)
Planning and follow-up	162.701	935.126
TOTAL PROJECT COST	1.953.480	22.896.726

In 1988 Rädda Barnen opened a Training Unit in Peshawar, five years after the organization's involvement with Afghan refugees in Pakistan began. At the end of 1996 the Unit is due to close down, though work with the refugees continues.

The rationale for the operation was to promote community-based social work among the refugees that would benefit, in particular, Afghan mothers and children.

This publication tells the story of why and how the Training Unit was created, what it did and the problems it encountered during the period 1988-1994.

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Art nr 860

Annex 6: Some considerations in assessing results

First, any appraisal of results must try to avoid pitfalls* and include the notion of quality; quantity alone is an inadequate measure. For instance, though it would be interesting to learn that so many war-traumatized children had received a new kind of treatment, it would tell more about achievement to know how many responded well to it – and whether it offered hope to other war-affected children. There is very little indeed of this kind of information to be found in the available documentation.

Second, measurement of results, even without considerations of quality, poses a problem. "Many, maybe most, of the activities performed by the social workers in the refugee camps are impossible to measure." *(Karlén, 1990, p 10)* For the objective was not so much training of skills and imparting of knowledge as "the stimulation of communal self-help action in the refugee villages. The training is a means to that end." *(Bartle & Segerström, 1991 (A), p 6)*

Third, Any attempt at a cost/benefit analysis of the Training Unit would probably find adequate data on input of money and resources as well as quantitative output of the Training Unit. The big information gap concerns effects on the refugees, including effects on the children.

Fourth, and finally, whatever results the Training Unit achieved must be considered in the general context of aid work in Pakistan and in comparison with the achievements of other voluntary organizations working with refugees there.

What it was hoped documents and interviews would provide in the way of information for the final chapter fell some way short of expectations. Answers were sought to the following questions:

1. Who and how many were trained? (Quantitative output). In its almost seven years of existence, how many people the Training Unit trained, in which years it trained the most, and of those trained, how many were Afghans, how many Pakistanis, how many were men, how many women. This information of course relates to the output of the Training Unit rather than its effect on the refugees.

2. Who and how many benefited, in what ways? (End results.) How Afghan refugee women and children were helped as a result of work by the Training Unit – and how refugees in similar circumstances might be helped more effectively in future. This is really the key aspect in trying to assess the value of the work of the Training Unit. But few facts and data are available about the women and children who have benefited from the Training Unit.

3. What lessons were learnt? (Mainly methodology) How lessons learnt by the Unit affect aid agencies generally and, more specifically, UNHCR and Rädda Barnen. How these lessons apply to operations at headquarters and in the field and what they have to say about cooperation between aid agencies.

NOTE: The number of selp-help groups that ceased to operate is not necessarily an indication they didn't work. It could also indicate they successfully fulfilled their purpose and/or that priorities had changed. Many activities ceased in the village-camps when everyone's mind was geared to repatriation. But skills learnt in training and in self-help groups are likely to be of value both to those who return to Afghanistan and those who do not.

* The most obvious trap is to judge output by input – so much time, effort, blood, sweat and tears expended – which really doesn't have much relevance. Another is to confuse production process with results i.e. activities (work put in) with achievement. Another: to exclude the notion of quality "because you can't measure it". Yet another trap is to measure what is easy to measure rather than what is relevant. Finally: to view quality from the point of view of those providing goods or services instead of that of the beneficiaries.

Foreword

This report, about Rädda Barnen's involvement with Afghan refugees in Pakistan, focuses on the Training Unit it set up in Peshawar in 1988 to promote community-based social work in the refugee settlements.

Several evaluations have been made of the Unit over the past few years, from various perspectives. So far, however, there has not been a comprehensive record of its work for a wide readership – a gap this report attempts to fill.

The report recounts the conception, setting up and development of the Training Unit, which depended on cooperation between Rädda Barnen, the Government of Pakistan's Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It is, though, less a record of how the organizational triumvirate worked than a narrative account of the imagination and commitment of various individuals who have been involved with the Training Unit at one time or another. The report presents the problems they met and what they consider are lessons learnt from their experience, some of which may be relevant to future social work with refugees, by Rädda Barnen and others.

Unattributed views expressed in the following pages are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Rädda Barnen.

Johan Stånggren
Acting Programme Director
March 1995

Background

This introductory chapter outlines the situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. It gives some details about the refugees themselves, including the children, and a brief history of Rädda Barnen's involvement with them.

The Afghans, the world's largest refugee population, estimated in 1992 at over 6 million, went mostly to Pakistan and Iran. There were 3-4 million in Pakistan at the end of the 1980s and, despite repatriation, there were still more than 1.5 million in 1994. The Afghan refugee population in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province(NWFP) alone was estimated at 2.5 million in 1992, and 75 per cent of them were women and children. Some 12 per cent of the refugee women were widows.

"The majority of refugees originate from the Afghan provinces of Paktia, Logar, Kunduz, Helmand and Nangahar and are 24 per cent adult male, 27 per cent adult female and 49 per cent children". *(UNGA document A/AC.96/825/Part V/9 of 10 August 1994)*

The first influx began in 1976; the Afghans came to make a base to fight the Soviet-backed government in Kabul. Their numbers greatly increased in 1979, following the arrival of Soviet troops in their country. When these troops were withdrawn in February 1989 after unsuccessfully trying to defeat the *mujahidin* (the different resistance armies), many refugees began to return to Afghanistan, though others remained – and the flow into Pakistan continued. In 1994, although Pakistan closed its border to Afghanistan in January, the refugees – now mostly from Kabul – continued to infiltrate their way into the country.

Afghan leaders vowed their people would not return until an Islamic government had been established in Kabul and the Pakistan government backed them in seeking a military solution. Another factor holding up repatriation has been factional fighting among the *mujahidin* – still going on at the end of 1994.

Three-quarters of the refugees settled in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), especially at first in the area around the main city, Peshawar, where they came to constitute more than 50% of the population. Eventually, the government felt obliged to take action and transferred many of them further away, e.g. to the Mardan and Hazara districts.

They had a lot in common with the local population, which contributed initially to a relatively smooth assimilation. The dominant ethnic group, both in Afghanistan and NWFP, is Pushtun. There are also sizeable minorities of Baluchi, Nuristanis, Tadjiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmen and Mongols. A few of the refugees were pastoralists, who took with them their cattle, sheep or goats and settled in the tribal areas of NWFP with others of their own tribe.

UNEQUAL AID DISTRIBUTION

There are some 12 million Pushtuns*, spread out over eastern and south-eastern Afghanistan and NWFP in Pakistan; about 2 million of them are nomads. Their language is Pashto and their religion is Islam. Sunni Muslims dominate among the refugees in Pakistan though in areas along the border the Shiites are very strong. These areas can be likened to a no-man's-land, where tribal laws prevail.

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* Some sources write "Pashtun", others "Pushtun" – or even "Pushtoon"

Basic facts about where and how the refugees live have changed little in a decade. "Most of the registered refugees live in camps... in NWFP. Besides, an unknown number of unregistered refugees either live in the towns and villages of the province, in rented rooms or houses or in un authorized 'camps' trying to create an existence of their own; or, as is the case with many nomads, migrate around the country. A widespread practice... of migration from the camps in the hot plains up to the cooler mountain areas in summer, and back again in autumn, renders it still more difficult to estimate their number, since it often entails double-registration". *(Boesen, 1983, p 2)*

So the Afghans were able to merge in with the local population much more easily than most other refugee groups. (There had always been trade, intermarriage and frequent cross-border passage.) They were, like their hosts, mostly small agriculturalists; like them, nearly all Muslims and mostly Pushtuns, who are considered to be the most conservative Afghans, in terms of their view of women's work and position in society. The pastoralists are more liberal in their attitudes to women.

The Pakistan government at first gave free access to the Afghans, allowed them to mingle with its own nationals and to compete for jobs with them – but not to farm or to own land. However, the economic, social and environmental strain of accommodating such an enormous refugee population soon began to tell. As early as 1983, the many Afghan refugees competing for jobs were creating problems and tension by lowering the level of wages.

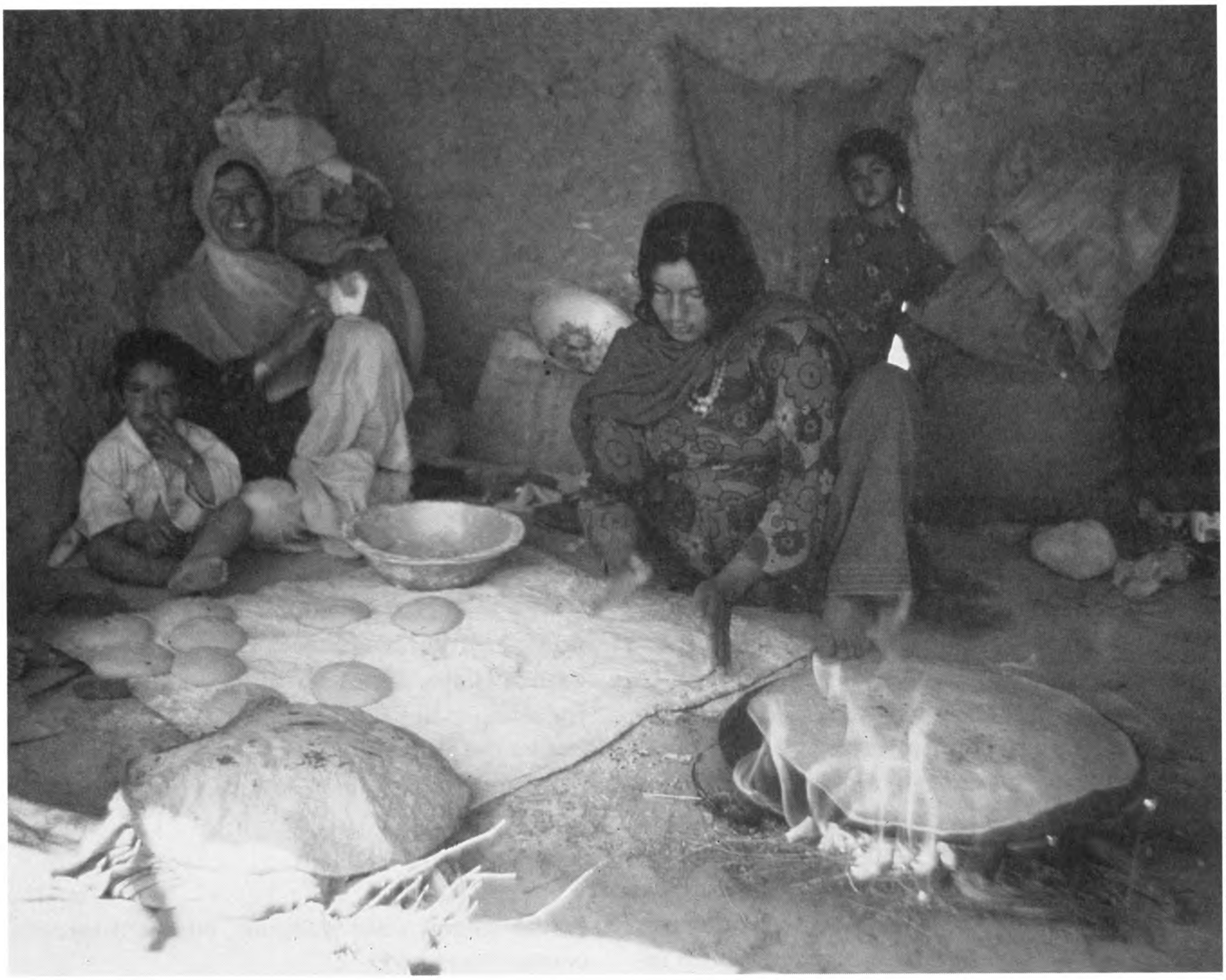


PHOTO: UNHCR/S. ERRINGTON/OCT 1990

THE PASHTUN SOCIETY*

To a large extent the Pashtun society is still a tribal society, where the organization of its members in groups of varying size, and their perception of relations to other members of the society, are based on kinship relations, traced through men... The Pashtun live in household units that may be either elementary families or extended families, consisting of a male household head, his sons, the wives and children of these men, and possibly old relatives such as the mother of the male household head. If the family own land, it is considered as the joint property of the household... Every individual household perceives itself as autonomous and equal to the other households in the village and kinship world. This feeling – and ideal – of autonomy and equality plays a very important role in Pashtun consciousness; it constitutes their image of a "true" Pashtun. It is also the foundation of the concept of honour.

Just as the household shares its material property jointly, it shares its family honour, represented through its male household head. Family honour is associated with the maintenance by the family, and the household head, of the integrity of its house, land, and women... and with its ability and readiness to defend this against aggression from others... Honour is the basis of the unwritten Pashtun set of norms and behavioural standards which is often termed Pashtunwali ("the Pushtun way".) It is essential constantly to fulfill the demands and observe the norms of Pashtunwali, strive to behave oneself in such a way as to keep one's honour intact and unquestioned...

If the norms are breached it brings shame on the family. Both Pashtunwali and the religion, Sunni Islam, are strong elements in the Pashtun conceptual universe. On most points they reinforce each other, such as their views on the role of the family and the status of women.

It can be said that there exists a "social division of labour" between the sexes in the sense that the outer world, i.e. outside the home, is the realm of men, whereas women are associated with the private sphere of the home, to such a degree that they are not supposed to let themselves be seen by, or interact with, men from other households (except close relatives). This is the essence of Purdah, the veiling and seclusion of women. By observing Purdah, through staying at home, wearing a veil when leaving it, and generally observing behavioural standards of modesty and reticence, Pashtun women participate in the maintenance of the family honour.

The actual degree of Purdah observance naturally depends on the wealth and social status of the individual family. Relatively affluent families are able to keep... women more at home, because they can afford to hire labour to help in the outside tasks, something that a family of modest means cannot. Here all the family members including the women have to participate in the work. Women fetch water and firewood, and help at the planting and harvesting.

Apart from the farm work, which is actually considered slightly shameful, since it conflicts with the ideal of Purdah, women's work is mostly in the home: housework, caring for children, etc. Women of an extended family co-operate at many tasks, and likewise women from several households, related through paternal or maternal ties, co-operate and visit each other.

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* From an interim report of a feasibility study on the establishment of income-generating activities, primarily for women, among Afghan refugees in NWFP, Pakistan, by Inger W. Boesen of the Danish Refugee Council, February 1983.

The Rädda Barnen Training Unit

Community-based social work with Afghan refugees in Pakistan

By David Millwood



Rädda Barnen
SWEDISH SAVE THE CHILDREN